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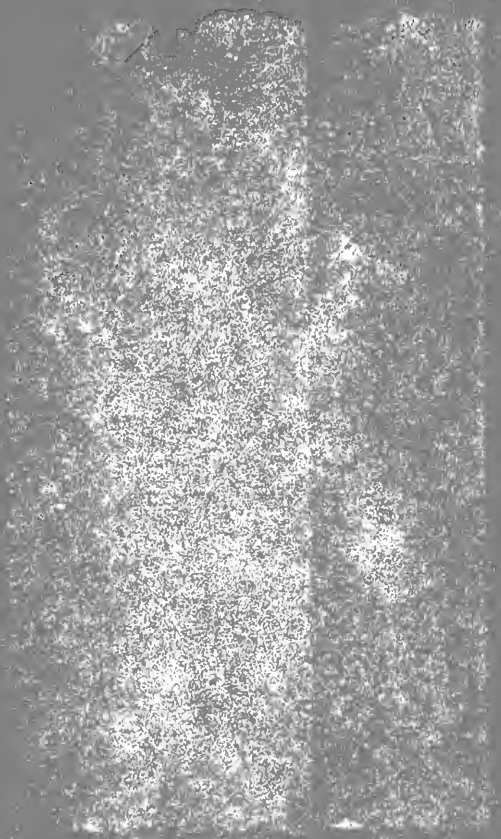

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ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

WAS THE OLD TESTAMENT WRITTEN IN HEBREW?

EDOUARD NAVILLE, D.C.L., LL.D., F.S.A.

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LONDON: ROBERT SCOTT
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MCMXIII

EDITOR'S GENERAL PREFACE

IN no branch of human knowledge has there been a more lively increase of the spirit of research during the past few years than in the study of Theology.

Many points of doctrine have been passing afresh through the crucible; "re-statement" is a popular cry and, in some directions, a real requirement of the age; the additions to our actual materials, both as regards ancient manuscripts and archaeological discoveries, have never before been so great as in recent years; linguistic knowledge has advanced with the fuller possibilities provided by the constant addition of more data for comparative study; cuneiform inscriptions have been deciphered, and forgotten peoples, records, and even tongues, revealed anew as the outcome of diligent, skilful and devoted study.

Scholars have specialized to so great an extent that many conclusions are less speculative than they were, while many more aids are thus available for arriving at a general judgment; and, in some directions at least, the time for drawing such general conclusions, and so making practical use of such specialized research, seems to have come, or to be close at hand.

Many people, therefore, including the large mass of the parochial clergy and students, desire to have in an accessible form a review of the results of this flood of new light on many topics that are of living and vital interest to the Faith; and, at the same time, "practical" questions—by which is really denoted merely the application of faith to life and to the needs of the day—have certainly lost none of their interest, but rather loom larger than ever if the Church is adequately to fulfil her Mission.

It thus seems an appropriate time for the issue of a new series of theological works, which shall aim at presenting *a general survey* of the present position of thought and knowledge in various branches of the wide field which is included in the study of divinity.

The Library of Historic Theology is designed to supply such a series, written by men of known reputation as thinkers and scholars, teachers and divines, who are, one and all, firm upholders of the Faith.

It will not deal merely with doctrinal subjects, though prominence will be given to these; but great importance will be attached also to history—the sure foundation of all progressive knowledge—and even the more strictly doctrinal subjects will be largely dealt with from this point of view, a point of view the value of which in regard to the "practical" subjects is too obvious to need emphasis.

It would be clearly outside the scope of this series to deal with individual books of the Bible or of later Christian writings, with the lives of individuals, or with merely minor (and often highly controversial) points of Church governance, except in so far as these come into the general review of the situation. This detailed study, invaluable as it is, is already abundant in many series of commentaries, texts, biographies, dictionaries and monographs, and would overload far too heavily such a series as the present.

The Editor desires it to be distinctly understood that the various contributors to the series have no responsibility whatsoever for the conclusions or particular views expressed in any volumes other than their own, and that he himself has not felt that it comes within the scope of an editor's work, in a series of this kind, to interfere with the personal views of the writers. He must, therefore, leave to them their full responsibility for their own conclusions.

Shades of opinion and differences of judgment must exist, if thought is not to be at a standstill—petrified into an unproductive fossil; but while neither the Editor nor all their readers can be expected to agree with every point of view in the details of the discussions in all these volumes, he is convinced that the great principles which lie behind every volume are such as must conduce to the strengthening of the Faith and to the glory of God.

That this may be so is the one desire of Editor and contributors alike.

W. C. P.

London.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE title of this book: *Archaeology of the Old Testament*, does not agree exactly at first sight with its contents, which turn entirely on the question of language, and in which I have attempted to show that the books of the Old Testament, as we know them, in their present Hebrew form, are not in the original language written by their authors.

This question, which seems purely literary, is, however, archaeological in its origin. It has been raised by excavations in Egypt. It arose when first the fellaheen unearthed the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, and afterwards when the pick and spade of scientific explorers brought to light the Aramaic papyri of Elephantiné.

When the bearing of these two thoroughly unexpected finds is considered on all sides and when the circumstances in which these documents originated, the political, social and religious conditions which they presuppose are studied without any bias, one cannot help being led to question the assumption which has been long undisputed and held as unassailable, that these books of the Old Testament are in the language used by their authors when they wrote them down, and that they went through one change only, that of the script. For square Hebrew does not go further back than the time of the Christian era, when it took the place of the old Hebrew or Canaanite alphabet. Such is the foundation on which rest all the

present systems which profess to explain the composition of the Old Testament, especially the constructions of the critics, their minute analysis of the text, and the conclusions they have derived from that analysis.

In regard to this, I put forward the following facts which can hardly be disputed. Before Moses, and after his time, Babylonian cuneiform was used in Palestine for official documents, contracts, and anything connected with law. The popular form of Babylonian and Assyrian cuneiform, their book form, was Aramaic as we know from the so-called bilingual tablets, and from the Aramaic version or papyrus of the inscription of Behistun. The Jews settled in Egypt wrote and spoke Aramaic, which was not the language of the country. The script peculiar to the Hebrew or Jewish language, the square Hebrew, is derived not from the Canaanite, but from the Aramaic alphabet.

These facts, the historical value of which may be recognized without being a Semitic scholar, do not seem to have been grasped by the critics in their fullness. Philological criticism is here out of place. History is the point of view from which these discoveries have to be studied; and looking at them in that light, I have been drawn to conclusions very different from the theories now in vogue. Some of these conclusions have only dawned upon my mind by degrees, from a careful study of the Aramaic papyri.

During the last ten years the historical methods have gone through a period of change. Anthropology and biology claim to be heard. For an explanation of the past, we now look, more than was done before, at the present condition of mankind. This principle I have endeavoured to follow, and the reader will find that in several cases I have taken examples from the

present day which seemed to strengthen the argument.

Our notion of language is also different from that of the old linguistic school. Language is no more pre-eminently a written text. It is the speech of living men, which may vary according to time and localities. Social circumstances may have induced men to invent an alphabet, to adopt a written language. But this progress towards unity is more or less conventional; it is not limited by political boundaries. It may extend in religious, literary or legal matters over countries where the people speak different dialects. A written language has not of necessity a script of its own which distinguishes it from neighbouring idioms. It may adopt one in common with other languages. Cuneiform is one of the most striking examples of an alphabet used for different tongues.

Historical facts viewed in the light of new methods are the foundation of my theory, which in certain respects will be considered as more radical and revolutionary even than Reuss' critical system when it first appeared. Relying on that evidence, I can, using the expressions of one of the most conservative critics, the late Dr. Briggs, "have the face" to challenge "the Old Testament scholars of the world." On the other hand the readers will recognize that the new line I have taken has brought me back to the old traditional view about the authorship of several books of Scripture. I hope that such chapters as that on Egypt will show that it is not through any "dogmatic environment" but from a sincere conviction based on facts, that I joined the "contemptible minority" which still believes in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and that I have ranked myself among the so-called "anti-critics" in spite of the distinguished divine's prophecy, "The signs of the times indicate that

in a few years they will disappear as completely as the slave-holders."

This book consists of two parts, each of them dealing chiefly with the results of one of the two great discoveries. Since it is intended for the public, and not for scholars only, I have not gone into long discussions. Philological questions being left aside, by the nature of the argument, it was not necessary to mention the names of the critics, except occasionally. For instance, in the chapter on Genesis I quote Kautzsch and Socin, not because their views are not held by others, but because on their analysis of that work rests the coloured or "rainbow" Genesis which is well known. The quotations of the Biblical text are always from the Revised Version, the translation generally used by scholars.

I cannot close without expressing to the Rev. Wm. C. Piercy my deep thankfulness for the invaluable help he gave me in improving my English style. Still, I must beg the British and American readers who will do me the honour to peruse these pages, to be indulgent as regards the form, and not to mind here and there expressions which may sound too much like French, the native language of the present writer.

Whatever may be the judgment of the critics, I shall feel myself very fortunate if my conclusion that the words of the Old Testament, like those of our Lord, have come to us in a form which is not their original garb, and that the oldest of them are the work of the author whose name they bear, may attract the attention of those who have a sincere reverence for the Holy Writ, and may induce them to look more closely into systems which are now generally presented by their authors and supporters as being above discussion.

EDOUARD NAVILLE.

CONTENTS

PART I

THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT BEFORE SOLOMON

PART I

The Books of the Old Testament before Solomon

ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Was the Old Testament written in Hebrew?

CHAPTER I

THE LANGUAGE

Babylonian Cuneiform

IN what language were the earliest books of the Old Testament originally written? I mean the Pentateuch, and the books prior to Solomon's time. This question will certainly startle a great number of my readers. Up to the present, it has always been admitted, and considered as above discussion, that they had been written in Hebrew, and that the texts which we have were original, and not translations, not even adaptations from another idiom.

Still, various circumstances might have brought doubt to the minds of those who have made a closer study of these texts, especially to the higher critics who rely nearly exclusively on philological arguments.

It is an absolutely certain fact that these books have not been written in the square Hebrew of our Bible. This script, which is a modified form not of the old Hebrew or Phoenician alphabet, but of the Aramaic, did not assume the appearance under which we know it, before the time of the Christian era. Even then it was written without vowels. The vowel points added to it by the

Massora do not go further back than the fifth century, and the system was not completed till about the eleventh.

We learn from Josephus that the manuscripts brought to Ptolemy Philadelphus were written in characters very like the Syrian, or as we should say the Aramaic, and the rabbis tell us that Ezra brought from Babylon the Assyrian writing, *ashurit*, which was not the square Hebrew, but the Aramaic, such as we know it from the papyri found at Elephantiné.

But before the Aramaic, the alphabet commonly in use must have been the Canaanite or Phoenician, known to us by the inscriptions coming from Phoenicia proper and Carthage, and outside of these regions by a small number of engraved texts, the most important of which are the stele of Mesha, the king of Moab, and the inscription of Siloah of the time of Hezekiah, and also by the newly discovered *ostraca* from Samaria.

Was this alphabet ever used for books? Have the earliest documents of the Old Testament been written with those characters? This very grave question has been raised quite lately, and discoveries such as the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna compel us to face it and to take it into serious consideration. Looking at it in the light of the different finds of the last thirty years, we cannot but arrive at the conclusion that the oldest documents of Hebrew literature have been written neither in the Hebrew language, nor with the Hebrew script, but in the idiom and with the characters of the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna, namely Babylonian cuneiform.

In studying the beginnings of a literature like that of the Hebrews, we must bear in mind an important fact too often overlooked, and which we may observe everywhere in our time in spite of our schools. There is a considerable difference between the speech of the people

and their written language. When we consider nations of the remote past, owing to our own education we cannot sufficiently divest ourselves of the idea that there is an abstract thing called " the tongue " which is subject to strict rules set down by scholars. Every man is imbued with these rules from his childhood, and their domain is limited by definite geographical boundaries. This view, which still prevails largely in philology, is purely theoretical and is opposed to the facts observed by anthropology.

Spoken language existed long before it was put down in writing. In many parts of the world, there are still primitive tribes or nations for whom language is only speech, and who know no writing. They do not feel the want of it. In their commercial intercourse, when they barter or exchange, they do not employ any written document. In any transaction which is binding for the future, they would call for witnesses; and their laws are mere customs transmitted from father to son, without much change, and these sometimes persist through ages. Writing, or rather written language, is a convention, the result of social progress, and it supposes a more advanced degree of civilization. But written language does not supersede the original speech, it does not mean its abolition, not even its change, except in highly civilized modern nations with compulsory education. Both may have a parallel existence and their own special domain.

Especially if we consider the religious books, the difference is particularly striking. Take for instance the Bible; even in Protestant countries where it has been translated into the native tongue, the people do not use the language of the Bible. The labourer in the field does not speak as does his clergyman in the pulpit, and a certain respect for Holy Writ may even prevent him from using

sentences or words taken from its contents. Supposing we wished to ascertain the language of a peasant from one of the rural counties, we should not turn for that to the Authorized Version. The reverse is equally true.

This difference exists not only for religious books, but also for laws which are transmitted in the same form and in the same words during many generations; and generally speaking for all legal documents, as well as for records of what has taken place in the past. They are composed in a language more or less conventional, although here and there, in official writings, in contracts or anything connected with law, local expressions may appear borrowed from what is spoken by the people. It would be easy to quote many instances of these facts, taken from languages of the present day, though schools and education greatly contribute to unify the language of a country and to wipe away the variety of dialects such as that existing even in a small land like Switzerland. The origin of these dialects certainly goes back earlier than the first attempts at literary language.

But let us revert to the old Hebrews, to the contemporaries of Abraham, to Moses or to the early prophets like Samuel. There is absolutely no proof that in that remote time there existed already a written literature; I mean a written Hebrew such as that which we find in the Bible.

That does not mean that there was no literature of the people, no unwritten compositions such as we find in nearly all nations. Take the primitive men who do not know what writing is, or those who practically have no writing, the illiterate populations of some remote parts of Europe, the peasants of the Middle Ages, or the people who till recently lived chiefly on war and brigandage; they have their literature, their songs, their myths and

often very fine poetry. The authors of these songs or of these poems are often unknown; they were not men trained in the schools. They have not composed their songs pen in hand in a language approved by literary authorities and called by them classical. Their poetry has been dictated to them by the inspiration of the hour, and it has been transmitted orally from generation to generation perhaps long before it was put down in writing, or before some lover of folklore gathered it for fear it might be forgotten. We might quote a great number of national songs the origin of which is not known; they nearly always are in the common and usual language of the people, and they are quite independent of the written literature which may exist at the same time and among the same people.

This unwritten literature may increase and progress even where there is a considerable written literature which rules in its own field. A striking instance may be quoted from the history of the city of Geneva. In the night of the 12th of December, 1602, the city was miraculously saved from a treacherous attack by the Duke of Savoy. This event is called in the popular language "*l'Escalade.*" The following morning the population flocked to the cathedral and sang Psalm cxxiv. But this was not the popular Te Deum. There arose a long hymn, from beginning to end in the popular dialect. The first words would be translated: "He Who is above." As the original does not belong to the written language, there is no orthography for these words and they may be spelt in various ways. The learned who follow the rules of historic grammar will write: *cé qué l'én Haut*; but this is not the usual spelling, which is either *cé qu'é l'aino*, or *cé qué laino*. In a popular song like this, people do not apply the rules of the schoolmaster, they write

what they hear and what they speak; for them words are sounds, and they are guided by the ear.

This hymn arose in a city where a few years before Calvin had published his works, which are considered as the standard prose of the time, where he had preached his sermons, where his successor, Theodore Beza, was still teaching, and where there was a considerable literature in the French of the time. This was understood by the people, but it was very different from the every-day speech, and from the popular hymn. It was their religious language and also the official one, used for purposes of law and in the councils of the government. Let us suppose the case of a philologist two thousand years hence, arguing that the written language of Geneva cannot be the same French as that which was used in France, but that there must be a specially Genevese written literature in the Genevese language which became literary when the hymn of 1602 was written. This learned man would reason in a way very similar to that of some Hebrew scholars who consider it to be certain that there existed in early times a Hebrew written literature, and who rely for their conclusion upon the following fact.

I shall quote only one of the most eminent Hebrew scholars. Professor Koenig tells us that a literary Hebrew language must have existed at least at the time when the song of Deborah originated, which according to the judgment of the most acute critics goes back as far as the time of the Judges. In my opinion the song of Deborah does not prove anything as to the existence of a written Hebrew language. Deborah is a prophetess, she is one of those heroines, of whom we know several in history, who arise in critical times. Her nation is crushed down by Jabin the king of the Canaanites. She calls on

Barak and commands him to gather the Israelites and to march against the oppressor. Barak refuses to do so, unless Deborah goes with him. They smite the enemy, and when Barak pursues him, Jael shows him Sisera whom she has slain.

Hearing of this great deliverance, Deborah does not sit down to write a poem (Judges v.). She breaks forth into a pæan of praise and joy. She sings: "Awake, awake, Deborah, utter a song." She is carried away by her feelings, and such a mighty exultation can only be expressed in language spontaneous and familiar to her, such as she, as well as the triumphant Israelites, speak every day. She does not consult the books which may exist at the time, she does not shape her sentences in accordance with the words of the law, of which she was probably absolutely ignorant; she sings. Her hymn may afterwards have become a national song, a song of victory which one generation transmitted to the following, until it was written down by the author who compiled the book of Judges; but certainly it is quite independent of any written literature, and it does not give the slightest indication as to the existence of books written in the same language. Unless it has been modified in later time, it shows what the Israelites spoke in her time, but nothing more. We might be tempted to consider Deborah's song as a piece of a written literature, if the discoveries of the last twenty years had not revealed to us the great use made in Palestine of Babylonian cuneiform.

It certainly was an archaeological event of first importance when the fellaheen of Tel-el-Amarna in Middle Egypt came upon the hoard of cuneiform tablets, an important and valuable part of the archives of Amenophis IV. It is hardly necessary to describe anew this correspondence.

It first revealed the absolutely unknown and startling fact that Babylonian Cuneiform was the usual written language in Palestine at the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty. It is quite natural, and what might have been anticipated, that kings of Mesopotamia like Burnaburiash should use that language and writing, which evidently were their own. But it was all the more surprising and unexpected from governors of the Palestinian cities who had to write to their sovereign and report to him what was going on in the region they governed. Why did Abd-hiba of Jerusalem, Abi-milki of Tyre and all the prefects of Zidon, Megiddo, Ashkelon, Gaza, write in Babylonian unless it was their own written language. For the king of Egypt did not understand it ; he was obliged to resort to the help of a *targumanu*, a dragoman. Letters of that kind must be in the language either of the ruler or of the subject. Since it was not that of the Pharaoh, it could only be that of the Canaanite governors.

The scholars who have studied that correspondence are unanimous in saying that it is Babylonian or Assyrian with a clear Canaanite trace. One of them who has made a special study of those texts with that point of view, Dr. Boehl, says that the Assyrian of these letters is only a thin veil which hides the native language of the writers. This fact seems to me the best proof that these letters show the written language of the country. They are permeated with words and forms belonging to the spoken language. This might have been expected. Take a language like French, which extends over various countries and over a wide area. Two letters, written one at Bordeaux and the other at Brussels, will not be in a language exactly similar. Especially if the writers are not very cultivated, their letters will deviate from the typical and conventional prose which is called French and

contain local words, perhaps also local forms. Two legal documents will perhaps differ still more, since they will be obliged to make a greater use of words to which the people are accustomed. It seems to have been exactly the same with Assyrian or Babylonian. A writer in Babylon would not forget his own dialect, nor would the governor of Ashkelon. The script is the same for both, and so is the language in its general appearance; nevertheless it bears traces of what is spoken in the native country of each of them.

The correspondence of Tel-el-Amarna, which is later than the first settlement of the Hebrews in Canaan but older than the conquest of Canaan, is not all that we have of cuneiform documents from Palestine. A rich harvest of tablets was gathered at Boghaz Keui, the capital of the Hittites. In that place was discovered the cuneiform copy of the treaty between Rameses II and the king of the Hittites, Hattusil. From Palestine itself originated a series of letters and edicts written both in Assyrian and Hittite concerning the Amurru, the Amorites, a Palestinian nation.

In Palestine, at Gezer, two contracts have been discovered. According to Professor Macalister more might have been found had the excavations on that spot not been stopped by a native cemetery. These contracts are about the sale of property. They are legal documents having a local origin, and in language which must have been the legal language of the city. They are in cuneiform Assyrian; one very fragmentary letter is said to be in cuneiform Babylonian. These contracts are of the years 650 and 647 B.C., showing that even at that late time cuneiform writing was still in use.

At Taanach also eight tablets or fragments have been discovered. I cannot do better than quote the words of

the excavator, Dr. Sellin. After having said that from 1500 to 1350 Babylonian writing was the only one used at the courts of the princes of Palestine, the learned author adds: "Even supposing that this writing was used only by the rulers and their officials, and that the people could not read or write, this fact is certain: in the already extensive excavations carried on in Palestine, no document was ever found except in Babylonian writing. As for the Phoenician old Hebrew writing . . . it cannot be asserted with certainty that it existed before the ninth century." [1]

Thus, from the time preceding the conquest of Canaan down to the seventh century, we find in Palestine cuneiform documents in the Assyrian or Babylonian language, which was the literary language as well as that of laws and religion, differing up to a certain point from the speech, or idiom, of the people, as we see that literary language does at the present day even in the most civilized countries.

It is not necessary to go back to the origin of cuneiform writing, which succeeded a linear script and which took its well-known appearance when the writer saw that he could write much more quickly by pressing his stylus into soft clay. Cuneiform may be called the cursive writing of an old linear script. It entirely superseded the linear since it was copied even on the sculptures of the palaces. Cuneiform writing can be imitated by engraving on stone or metal; but it cannot be written on anything but wet clay. It cannot be pressed into hard material such as a potsherd, nor can it be written on soft or thin stuff such as papyrus, or even skin.

In Mesopotamia where clay was abundant, all kinds of documents could be written on tablets. Not so in Palestine, a mountainous and dry country. Clay tablets

[1] *Tell Taannek Nachlese*, p. 35.

were used there for documents of importance which had to be preserved, like the deeds of property found at Gezer, letters which had to travel a long way, edicts and treaties of the Amorites ; but for common use, in a country where clay was not always at hand, it was necessary to have also another method of writing. For a short note or memorandum, for inscribing the number of jars of oil or wine, what corresponded to the scrap of paper which we use in such cases was a potsherd. On potsherd it was not possible to impress cuneiform characters with a stylus ; one could only make a coarse engraving or write with pen and ink. Therefore it was necessary to have an alphabet, different from cuneiform, which could be written and not pressed. The Canaanite, or so-called Phoenician, alphabet must have been at first a potsherd writing. If we look at the most ancient specimens, the *ostraca* found by Mr. Reisner at Samaria, we see that they are notes regarding what may have been the royal cellar, or its contents in wine and oil. The same excavation has produced also a cuneiform fragment which has not yet been deciphered, but which shows the presence of the two writings at the same time.

The Canaanite writing cannot be traced in Palestine before the time of Solomon, that is not until there were close relations with the Phoenicians. Whether the Phoenicians were the inventors of that alphabet or whether it is to be attributed to others is a question which is now very much discussed. No doubt they must have made great use of it in their trade, and must have contributed to diffuse it among their neighbours as far as the Greeks. But at the time of the Tel-el-Amarna correspondence the governors of Tyre and Zidon also wrote in cuneiform.

Let us now revert to what we read in Genesis : Abram went forth from Ur of the Chaldees, came first unto

Haran, and from there to the land of Canaan. We know the written language of Ur, the present Mukayyar. At first it was Sumerian, and after the Semitic conquest it was the Babylonian, which, later, was called Assyrian. The script was that of the Sumerians taken over by the Semites, the engraved linear being very soon entirely superseded by the pressed cuneiform. It is hardly to be supposed that Abram,[1] if he could write while he was in Mesopotamia, did not use Babylonian cuneiform.

As for the language which he spoke, we do not know exactly what it was. It certainly belonged to the Semitic family, but it probably differed from the book-language, from the style and forms of edicts, laws, or even religious texts, as is the case, even now, with the colloquial and popular idiom. Semitic scholars tell us that it must have been very like that which was spoken in Canaan. "Whether Abraham adopted the language of the Canaanites, or brought the Hebrew with him from the East, is unimportant, for the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian are nearer the Hebrew and Phoenician than they are to the other Semitic languages. If these languages, as now presented to us, differ less than the Roman languages, the daughters of the Latin, in their earlier stages, in the time of Abraham, their differences could scarcely have been more than dialectic." We thoroughly agree with Dr. Briggs' view. Between Abraham's idiom and that of Mamre, the Amorite, or Abimelech, the king of Gerar, there was only a difference of dialects; therefore they understood each other easily.

Dialects are generally unwritten languages. Here again I may be allowed to take an example from modern times, namely, from the German language. German-speak-

[1] In the use of Abram or Abraham, I follow exactly the differing use of the Bible (R.V.) for the different periods of his life.

ing nations extend over a vast area in Europe. But what is called German, the literary, conventional language, the origin of which may be traced to Luther's translation of the Bible, covers a considerable number of dialects which are not written, which go back to a high antiquity and which are still in use in the present day. I need not go very far. In the parts of Switzerland where German is spoken, each canton has its own dialect. What is heard at Berne sounds very differently from what is heard at Zurich. Nevertheless two men from these cantons who are in conversation will understand each other without the slightest difficulty ; they will both read the same Bible, which is not in the idiom which they speak ; when they write they will also both use the same forms, the same words, and the same spelling. Here the distinction between written and spoken language is as clearly marked as possible.

The circumstances must have been analogous in Canaan. The excavations have shown that between 2500 and 2000 B.C. a Semitic invasion conquered the old Canaanite population, and covered the greatest part of the country. The invaders evidently brought not only the idiom they spoke, but also their written language, which was Babylonian cuneiform. The tablets of Tel-el-Amarna and those of Taanach are indisputable proofs that, at the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Babylonian cuneiform was the written language of the country. At a later date the finds of Boghaz Keui, the correspondence of the Amorites, show that there had been no change in that respect. Even in the seventh century, at Gezer, cuneiform was still in use for certain documents, although by that time the Canaanite alphabet had been adopted. The old tradition had remained in force.

Now let us think of the Israelites in Egypt. They evidently took with them the language of Canaan, a tongue foreign to the Egyptians, one which they did not know. We read that Joseph's brethren, "knew not that Joseph understood them, for there was an interpreter between them." During the time of the captivity, living by themselves, apart from the Egyptians, they kept their language, as did, later, the Jewish colonists who settled in the country, like those of Elephantiné. If they had any writing, we have no proof whatever that they had the Canaanite alphabet, which, if it existed, was not used in Canaan, since the Egyptian captivity is the time of the Tel-el-Amarna correspondence. Besides, it is not probable that there were many of them who could write. The Israelites were nomads, shepherds who had preserved in Egypt their former way of living, and for whom the persecution consisted in a forced change of their habits. Instead of living the easy life of shepherds, they were compelled to be masons under hard taskmasters. In the life of cattle drivers there are not many occasions for writing; there is hardly any necessity for it. Therefore we must consider that among them, those who could write were only a few exceptional persons.

The only one of them who is known as having had what we might call a literary education is Moses, who was brought up like the son of Pharaoh's daughter, which means, as Stephen says in his speech, "that he was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Without giving a historical value to the legends which Josephus relates about the youth of Moses, we can admit what is shown by the narrative of Exodus, that he kept up some intercourse with his countrymen, and perhaps that he was used as an intermediate agent between the Egyptians and their Hebrew subjects. Moses could write; this is

constantly mentioned in the history of his life. But, certainly, the Semitic writing which he learnt at Pharaoh's court was not the Canaanite, and could only be Babylonian cuneiform. Among the discovered tablets there are answers from the Egyptian king. He must have had at his court men who could write the same language as that of the letters he received. The reports sent to him by the governors of the Palestinian cities were not in Egyptian, they were in the language of those officials; and Pharaoh would not have been understood if he had answered in Egyptian hieratic. It was necessary that he should have men who could write the language of Abd-hiba of Jerusalem, or Gitia of Ashkelon, dragomen like those of the embassies of the present day. If Moses was taught a Semitic writing, which seems natural considering his origin and position, it is obvious that he learnt Babylonian cuneiform, a writing which allowed him to have intercourse with the Semitic world of his time.

The first writing of Moses mentioned is the Decalogue, the two tables of the law. The late eminent Semitic scholar, M. Philippe Berger, had already come to the conclusion that the tables of the law were written in cuneiform, this being thus the sacred writing mentioned in Exodus xxxii. 16: "and the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." When Moses had hewn "two tables of stone like unto the first, he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments." (Exod. xxxiv. 28). Therefore Moses knew what is called God's writing.

If we turn to Egypt, we see that hieroglyphical script is also called the writing of the god himself. The Rosetta stone teaches us that hieroglyphs were called "the writing of divine words," and when we read of "writings of divine

words which are the book of Thoth," of an inscription engraved in blue " by the god himself," it clearly means writings in hieroglyphs which Thoth was supposed to have taught to mankind, and the expression is quite analogous to that of Exodus (xxxi. 18): tables of stone written with the finger of God.

In the case of the tables of the law, there is absolutely no reason to suppose that they were written in Egyptian hieroglyphs. Egyptian was not the language of the Israelites; they probably did not understand it, nor was this script their script, while Babylonian cuneiform extended all over Western Asia. Besides, if they had written the Ten Commandments in hieroglyphs, which was a picture writing, they would have had in the very text of their law likenesses of " forms in heaven above or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth " which were strictly prohibited by the Second Commandment.

The existence of a sacred writing which could only be cuneiform, different from the cursive, lasted as late as the prophet Isaiah, perhaps even later. We read (ch. viii. ver. 1): " And the Lord said unto me: Take thee a great tablet, and write upon it with the pen of a man *For Maher-shalal-hashbaz.*" The word which the Revised Version translates " tablet " is found only in this passage. The LXX have here: " a piece of new and large paper," and the Coptic has " a large piece of a new book "; the word book being that which in old Egyptian means a roll of papyrus. The French translation of M. Philippe Berger is: " prends un grand rouleau." Thus, according to all these translations, what the prophet is told to take is a piece of soft material, papyrus or perhaps skin, but neither a wooden nor a stone tablet.

The Hebrew words *hereth-enosh*, "pen of a man," show that there was a distinct instrument for another writing; and if we inquire with what this "pen of man" is contrasted, we find only the "finger of God" with which the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, were written (Exod. xxxi. 18). This explains the word *enosh* for man, which is generally poetical, and is employed "of man" in comparison "with God," especially when the writer wishes to contrast the weakness and inferiority of mankind with the majesty of Godhead. A striking instance of this passage of the eighth Psalm, verse 3: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers . . . What is man (*enosh*) that Thou art mindful of him. . . ." As there are two writings, the writing of God and that of man, the word for man is naturally *enosh*.

The word *hereth* is translated in the dictionaries by "style," an instrument for engraving on metal, and by metonymy as we say, style. But the LXX and the Coptic use two Greek words which mean a pencil, or sometimes a drawing in outline. This agrees well with the sense given by them to the first word: a piece of paper or skin on which they cannot draw anything but cursive writing; for cuneiform can be sculptured on stone, but otherwise it is a writing produced only by pressure on wet clay; it is not a drawing. The instrument used for cuneiform can only form wedges, it cannot make any curved line, it cannot draw. The pressure of the four-sided stylus would leave no trace on paper or skin, nor could it be used with ink. At the same time cuneiform could not be pressed into hard stuff like potsherds. Therefore, for any material which was not clay, it was necessary to have another alphabet, the Canaanite or the Aramaic alphabet, a writing which could be used with pen and ink or engraved on material like wax,

wood or potsherds. Undoubtedly this is the writing meant by Isaiah in using the words *hereth enosh.* Whatever be the literal translation of these two words, their true meaning is that given in the margin of the Revised Version: "common characters." Thus it seems certain that as late as the time of Isaiah there were two writings; one which was considered as having been originally the work of God engraved by His finger, the cuneiform, and one which was called human because it was used in every-day life and not for law or any literary purpose.

The old Hebrew potsherds found at Samaria, which are the accounts of the cellar of the king, show distinctly for what original purpose this alphabet was invented. Can we suppose that this script was used for the word of God or for the sentences of a legislator? We can hardly think so; and the fact that Isaiah is specially told to use common characters seems to indicate that he did not employ them when he wrote the word of God. The reason he is told to make this exception is given in verse 16: "Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples." This confirms the translation of the LXX. Isaiah is to take a piece of large paper, he is told afterwards to roll it up, to tie it with a piece of string and seal it, as was done for the Egyptian papyri. Cuneiform could not be pressed on any material which had to be rolled, therefore it was necessary that the prophet should use common writing, but the Babylonian cuneiform was still in existence in Isaiah's time.

Beside the Decalogue, Moses had to write the laws which God Himself had taught him. He would not use *hereth enosh*, nor the common characters, admitting even that they were invented in his time which is far from being established. They would never have been called the work of God. It is even doubtful whether in Palestine

they were adopted by learned people, for, except the stele of Mesha and the inscription of Siloah, there are no literary documents in that script, which may never have been used for books.

Moses called himself an Aramean like all the Israelites of his time. "An Aramean ready to perish was my father," says the author of Deuteronomy (xxvi. 5.) Even Josephus, the Jewish writer living under the Roman emperor, has preserved that tradition. When in his history he reaches the point of the arrival of Jacob in Egypt, he interrupts his narrative, as Genesis does, in order to introduce the description of the family of the patriarch; but before beginning the list he gives the following curious reason for quoting all the names: "I thought it necessary to record those names, in order to inform those who do not suspect it that we are Mesopotamians and not Egyptians."

The ancestor of Moses, Abram, is said to have started from Ur. In his native city he must have heard of the great legislator Hammurabi, "the royal offspring whom Sin has created, who enriched the city of Ur," as he says in the introduction to his famous code of laws. Can we suppose that Abram and his tribe, leaving Mesopotamia, where the literary language was Babylonian cuneiform, a language which was especially that of such laws as were called a divine inspiration, could take to Canaan any other literary language and any other writing? If at that time there had been in Mesopotamia a cursive writing, it would have been Aramaic, and not Canaanite Hebrew.

Since, after centuries of bondage in Egypt, the Israelites still considered themselves as Arameans, they must have preserved some tradition of the old country. It is quite possible that Moses knew who Hammurabi was, and that

this king was for him a legislator above all others. When he had to write laws himself, laws which God had dictated to him, as Marduk was said to have done for the Babylonian ruler, Moses must naturally have been inclined to adopt the language and writing in which the great lawgiver of his country had proclaimed and written his code. It was the most appropriate language for laws and also for expressing divine words.

The more attentively we consider the circumstances in which Moses lived, the nation to which he belonged, and the traditions which he followed, the clearer it appears that he could not have written anything but Babylonian cuneiform. This fact gives to his books a special character and throws a peculiar light on his whole work. We are too apt, in studying old writers of that remote time, to apply to them the cut-and-dried rules of the present day. We have now for every author some special fixed requirements which he has to fulfil. We have classified authors, we speak of an historian, a poet, a novel-writer, and for each one of these there are strict regulations which he cannot put aside. Besides this, a writer, especially a prose writer, has before his eyes a definite plan ; his work has a beginning and an end, and unrolls itself in accordance with a scheme which he has in his mind.

There is nothing of this in the case of Moses. He is not a professional writer ; he is a prophet and takes his tablets only when he feels inspired, or, as is often said, when the Lord speaks to him. One day he will be a poet, he will strike up the hymn of Miriam after the passage of the Red Sea. In the desert he will be the law-giver and, like Hammurabi, he will teach his people the law which he has received from God and write it down in order that it be not forgotten. Another time he will feel prompted

to record the ways of God towards His people since the beginning of the world. He will describe the creation of the earth, of the animals and of man, or he will picture Abraham's life. He will go into great detail about Joseph's time, and, for a reason which we can only presume, omit entirely what happened from Joseph's death to his own time.

It is very important to remember that Moses does not write in a book, not even in a papyrus roll. He is not obliged to take up his narrative where he left off. Cuneiform tablets are independent of each other, each one forms a whole. Nor is it necessary that he should follow the chronological order; the tablets relating the history of Joseph may have been written before the description of the creation.[1] The introduction of a tablet may sum up or even repeat what is found on another, as we see in the first two tablets of Genesis. There is no plan which binds the author to a certain order of his tablets or to certain proportions. It will be the redactor's task to put the tablets in order chronologically, to make a book out of them, like Genesis, and to link them together by transitions. Nevertheless the fact of Moses having written on tablets will always appear in the lack of connection which we notice in certain parts of the Pentateuch, especially in Genesis and which has been interpreted by the critics as showing the hands of several authors, the most important of whom are the Elohist, the Jahvist and the writer of the Priestly Code.

But the most serious consequence which we derive from the fact that the oldest Hebrew documents were written in Babylonian cuneiform, is that we must recognize that these books are not original documents as regards language. In their present form, they are trans-

[1] On tablets intended to form a series see p. 183.

lations or adaptations of documents written in another idiom. This is very much like what we have in the case of the New Testament. The rabbinic Hebrew in which we now read the books of Moses is to them what Greek is to the words of our Lord. Philological criticism, on which rests the reconstruction of the books of the Old Testament, has been exercised upon translations. The texts which the critics continually dissect with their philological microscope and in which new authors are constantly being discovered are not original. The picture shown to us of a kind of mosaic made of stones gathered in various places, the manufacture of which is described to us in the most minute detail, is all based upon what is but the latest form given to words and writings of the old Hebrew writers which have undergone several transformations. I shall only mention two: that of Ezra, who is said to have brought from the Captivity the writing called by the rabbis *ashurit*, the Assyrian, which is the Aramaic of Mesopotamia, and the transformation due to the rabbis of the first centuries of the Christian era who adopted the square Hebrew and the vowel points.

Ezra made a change of language as well as of writing. Where he transcribed the books in Aramaic characters, it was in order that they might be better understood, because at that time the Aramaic language was becoming more and more the idiom of the country. He not only replaced the alphabet by another, he adapted the text to the language which was then spoken and written. One can hardly call it a translation since it was only a dialectic modification. But that is enough to shake considerably, I even might say to destroy, the confidence in results which the critics have attained mainly through philological and literary analysis of the present text.

How many of the books of the Old Testament may have been written in Babylonian cuneiform? Evidently everything of which Moses was the author or which was written by Joshua, his disciple and successor. In Joshua we know from the proper names, especially those of the cities, that there was an older text which the LXX used for their translation. From Joshua to David's time, during the period of the Judges and the incessant wars of the Israelites with their neighbours, it is probable that there was not much writing. The Philistines against whom the Israelites struggled, and who, according to the latest discoveries, are supposed to have come from Crete, were probably not Semites. It is not likely that they introduced into the country a new alphabet. If any religious book was written at that time, as its author was a prophet or a man instructed in the law, he would naturally employ the sacred script and the language of Moses, the Babylonian cuneiform. However, there must have been, at an early date, an alphabet for common use. There is no doubt that there was one at the time of the prophets. We have seen that it is mentioned by Isaiah, and Jeremiah is described as writing with ink in a roll. That is the regular bookwriting of which we do not know with certainty whether it was Aramaic or the Canaanite alphabet. Old examples of Canaanite are the potsherds found at Samaria by Mr. Reisner and which are of the time of Omri, the father of Ahab. This alphabet, the Canaanite, or so-called old Hebrew, is the same as the Phoenician, and we find it after Phoenician influence was strongly established in the country.

The Old Hebrew Alphabet

Most Semitic scholars admit that the first Canaanite inscriptions are of the time of David or Solomon. It has

been argued that this alphabet bears the character of a script which has been long in use, therefore it must go back much further. But we do not know where it was invented, whether in Phoenicia or, as Professor Sayce thinks, among the tribes of Northern Arabia. It may be much older in its native country, and yet be a later importation into Palestine. Admitting that it was known in Palestine before Solomon, it does not follow that it was used for books and especially for sacred writings. It is even questionable whether old Hebrew or Canaanite was ever chosen for books, particularly in the most ancient times. We have no remains of anything literary in Phoenician or old Hebrew. The stele of Mesha of Moab can hardly be called a literary document. One can fancy a king of Moab having his inscription engraved in the language spoken by his subjects who perhaps had no literature nor script of any kind. What the excavations have revealed to us of literary matters are only two things : the cuneiform tablets of Tel-el-Amarna, Lachish, Gezer, Taanach, and Boghaz Keui, showing that Babylonian was the written language of Palestine at the time of Moses and later, and the papyri of Elephantiné, from which we gather that the Jews who had left their country to settle in Egypt spoke and wrote Aramaic.

The introduction of the Phoenician, or old Hebrew, alphabet must be connected with the increase of Phoenician influence in Canaan. We do not know when the Phoenician cities first became independent under their own rulers. In the correspondence of Tel-el-Amarna, the letters of Abi-milki of Tyre and Zimrida of Zidon are the same as the other ones, and are written in the same language. The distinct Phoenician character of these cities does not yet appear. As I said before, the Phoenician or Canaanite alphabet seems to have been invented

for common use, for writing on any material. An alphabet of that kind would be particularly useful for a nation of tradesmen like the Phoenicians. Various theories have been put forward as to its origin. We shall not inquire whether it comes from a tribe in the Arabian desert, or from the North. But it is hardly to be supposed that it originated among the Hebrews who, especially before Solomon's time, were an agricultural nation, and do not seem to have been much occupied with literary, or even industrial, pursuits.

The circumstances changed when Solomon came to the throne. His reign seems to have marked an important step in the progress of civilization. From the first, he was desirous of building a temple which should be a central point for the kingdom in general, but chiefly for worship according to the prescription of Deuteronomy: "the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His Name there, even unto His habitation" (xii. 5). But he had neither the necessary material for building a temple worthy of being "God's habitation," nor the skilled workmen who could work metal. He was obliged to apply to Hiram, King of Tyre, with whom he was at peace, and with whom he had made a league. He sent to him saying (1 Kings v. 6-2 Chron. ii. 7–10): "Now therefore command that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants; and I will give thee hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt say; for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Zidonians." It is the king himself who says that his subjects did not know how to work timber.

It was the same with metal (1 Kings vii 13): "And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.

He was the son of a widow woman of the tribe of Naphthali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass, and he was filled with wisdom and understanding and cunning to work all works in brass." Now if we consider the enormous levies of men sent to Lebanon to hew cedar and fir under the direction of Zidonians who instructed them how to do this, is it not natural to suppose that the Zidonians taught them also their alphabet, that the accounts, probably on potsherds, of the hire for the servants of Hiram which Solomon's officers had to pay were written in Phoenician script? Industry cannot very well go on without writing; and if Solomon had to rely upon the industry of the Phoenicians to such a large extent, surely he may well have taken over their writing also, and made use of it. The adoption of this new writing probably took place naturally amongst the workmen of the two nations, but if it became general amongst the subjects of Solomon, it must have emanated from the king himself by a decree or edict proclaimed by the highest authority in the kingdom. What gives to this hypothesis a certain degree of probability, is the fact that Solomon is described to us not as a warrior, like his father David, but as a man having literary tastes. He is said to have been an author: "who spoke of trees from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." Without taking the above passage too literally, we may infer that he was more qualified than any of the rulers who reigned at Jerusalem to adopt characters infinitely simpler and easier to handle than the cuneiform.

After Solomon, the time when we see Phoenician influence most prevalent, was during Ahab's reign. In his father's time the Phoenician script was commonly used

at Samaria, as we know from the great number of *ostraca* found by Mr. Reisner in Omri's palace. I fancy that it was owing to the conquest of Moab by Omri and Ahab that the Canaanite writing extended as far as Dhibon, where Mesha wrote his inscription. Later, Phoenician influence must have been in conflict with Assyrian, and was entirely superseded, especially in Judea, by the Assyrian conquest.

The idea that Solomon established in his kingdom the Canaanite writing for common use is an hypothesis which is not yet proved, but it seems to me to agree with the historical circumstances such as we know them from the books and with the character of Solomon, which was totally different from that of his father, and from that of the rulers of Israel, whoever they were, judges or kings, who preceded him. We are led again to the conclusion that before Solomon's time all religious books must have been written in Babylonian cuneiform.

CHAPTER II

GENESIS BEFORE THE SOJOURN IN EGYPT

THE evidence that has been reviewed in the preceding chapter seems to prove that the first books of the Old Testament were written in Babylonian cuneiform, on tablets. We should like now to consider further the bearing of this fact on the form of the book of Genesis. We shall consider chiefly the events which took place before the arrival of Jacob and his family in Egypt. Literary arguments rather than archaeological will often have to be adduced and also information which may be derived from Egyptian writings. But the reader must not expect to find here a complete study of this venerable document. A few points only will be chosen, showing the Mosaic authorship and the unity of the book.

The First Four Tablets

The review of the facts has led us to conclude that the Pentateuch and the earlier writings of the Old Testament were originally written in Babylonian cuneiform. Therefore they were written not in books, but on tablets. This fact is so important that I must be allowed to dwell again on the character of writings on tablets; for this circumstance involves a complete change in our views concerning these writings and in our method of studying them. We have to do away with the description and

the nature of what we call a book, whether it be written on a papyrus roll or printed like those of the present day. A book, especially an historical one, is made on a definite plan; it has a beginning and an end, and it must be composed according to a definite order. If it is divided into chapters, the middle ones or the last will not be written before the earlier ones. The second chapter presupposes the first, it is intimately connected with it as its logical successor. There is no break between the two, and the same connexion exists between the second and the third.

A tablet is something quite different. It is a whole, a composition, we might even say a book in itself; it is not connected with another, it does not follow a previous one, it does not go on to a succeeding one. It has no fixed place in a series as have the chapters of a volume. The author may write his tablets whenever he likes, he is not bound either by a chronological order or by a definite plan. Supposing a tablet to be a narrative, it may require an introduction which recalls facts mentioned in another one, or it may even be a summary of such facts. Therefore a series of tablets put together in book form, as was probably done by Ezra for the tablets of Moses, will necessarily produce a composition like Genesis, where the connexion is very loose between the different parts, and in which there are repetitions and a complete absence of proportion in the way each subject is treated. Naturally, a scholar who has not divested himself of the notion which we have of a book will find himself tempted to find different authors in a text which consists of fragments, pieced together, which one author wrote at various times and under various circumstances.

When Ezra compiled the tablets he could not begin

otherwise than by those which referred to creation. We can easily separate the first four: the creation of heaven and earth, the creation of mankind, the generations of men as far as Noah, and the deluge.

The first begins with an indication of time: in the beginning, ἐν ἀρχῇ, God created the heaven and the earth; then the writer relates the work of the six days, after which God rested. Being the summary of God's complete work, the narrative mentions the creation of man and the fact that he is to have dominion over all that had been made before. Since the creation of man is only an episode in the whole work, one feature in the general picture, it is not treated with such detail as it is in another tablet, the special subject of which is the creation of mankind. The tablet ended with these words: (ii. 4.) "These are the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were created." It is evidently an error to consider these words as the title of the next narrative—we should say, of the next tablet—which does not speak either of the creation of the heaven or of that of the earth. Some critics, e.g. Kautzsch and Socin, and others, have very correctly considered these words as the end of the first narrative. This seems also to be the interpretation of the LXX., who translate: *Αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὅτε ἐγένετο.* "This is the book of heaven and earth when they were created." A book ended there, or as we should say, a tablet. The word βίβλος, papyrus-book, is employed here because the LXX translated from Aramaic papyrus-rolls.

Now begins a new tablet, which, as we have said, is independent of the first; it is a book in itself. Therefore the first sentence does not follow the last one of the other tablet, as would be the case with two pages. It is a new narrative which requires an introduction. The events

related occur after the creation, but the author begins with contrasting the primitive state of the earth, when it was first created and before the existence of man, with the Garden of Eden (ii. 4.) "In the day that the Lord made heaven and earth ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐποίησεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς the earth was entirely barren, "for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground." But, when the Lord had formed man, He put him into the Garden of Eden, the vegetation of which was luxuriant. Why?—because a "river went out of Eden to water the garden," and man was there "to dress it and to keep it." At the beginning no rain and utter barrenness, on the contrary in the Garden of Eden where man had been put, abundance of plants and fruits due not to rain, but to a river which divides itself into four branches, a detail which it is very important to notice. I do not believe that the critics have ever paid any attention to this fact, since they suppose that all that is said of the river is an interpolation due to a different author. This, I do not hesitate to say, shows a strange lack of insight into the composition of the narrative. Why should the author have mentioned at the beginning the absence of rain and the emptiness which was the result of it, if it was not to put it in opposition to the riches and plenty which a river brought to the garden. It is interesting to notice that this reveals an author who knew Egypt. For him fertility is derived not from rain, but from a river, and this river divides itself into several branches. Evidently when he wrote that description Moses had the Nile before his eyes. We shall see in another chapter that he again quotes Egypt as the type of a fertile and rich country.

After the description of the river, which is somewhat detailed, the writer reverts to man whom the Lord has

put in the garden. He describes the command given to man not to eat from one of the trees, the birth of Eve, the temptation, the fall and its consequences, the birth of Cain and Abel and of their first descendants. The tablet closes, like the former one, with these words, which I translate from the LXX: (v. 1.) "This is the book of the generation of mankind." *Αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως ἀνθρώπων.* Here the Hebrew also has the word "book." The tablet of the creation of mankind ends there.

Another tablet begins (v. 1.) It also has the necessary introduction and it opens exactly like the former one with the words: "in the day that" . . . *ᾗ ἡμέρᾳ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός.* The author is about to describe the generations of men as far as Noah, and very aptly begins by saying that God made men male and female, therefore they could give birth to children. He here mentions only the father, while in the tablet of the generation of mankind the mother is nearly always mentioned. Here again we may recognize the man who knew Egypt, where the idea that a divine being, for instance a god, could give birth to his son from his own substance, by himself, was very familiar, an idea with which the writer of the tablet disagrees completely.

I believe we have also the indication of the end of this tablet. It goes as far as Noah, and the words (Gen. vi. 9), "these are the generations of Noah," seem to have been misunderstood. They cannot apply to the following narrative, which is that of the deluge. Even critics like Kautzsch and Socin have noticed the discrepancy between the title and the text, since they translate: this is the family-history of Noah. We must translate this rubric like that of the first tablet, to which it is exactly similar in Hebrew: "this is the generation of Noah." It is his genealogy since Adam.

The tablet of the deluge, which follows, is one of the most important of Genesis. It is, in fact, the description of Noah's life until his death. It bears very strongly the same character as each of the previous writings. It is a book in itself, which Moses may perhaps have written before he wrote the tablets of creation. Naturally, at the beginning the writer introduces the man who may be called the hero of the deluge. Noah was a righteous man who had three sons, and he walked with God while the inhabitants of the earth were corrupt. This is a repetition of what is in another tablet, which might be unknown to the reader, since this is not a mere continuation of it. In my opinion, this tablet ended with the death of Noah (ix. 29).

We cannot now go further in the separation and analysis of these tablets, which are no longer in their original language. But such seems to me the method according to which these ancient texts ought to be studied. They are a series of tablets, arranged by Ezra or by some compiler, whoever it might be. Each tablet is a whole in itself and may contain facts or sentences found also in another. The task of the critics is now to separate them and to distinguish the old documents from the work of the compiler. Putting them together, changing their language and their script must necessarily have had some influence on the text. I should fancy, for instance, that the compiler would replace geographical names absolutely unknown to his contemporaries by those in use in his time, just as a French writer of the present day might put Paris in place of Lutetia.

I believe that if the Pentateuch is studied in this light, many of the assertions which are proclaimed by the critics to be unassailable are bound to disappear. What reason is there for assigning different authors to the four tablets

which we traced in the first nine chapters of Genesis? For instance, the first tablet, the creation of heaven and earth, being attributed to the Priestly Code, must be post exilic, and therefore 400 years younger than the second, the creation of mankind, which is Jahvist. Yet there is no discrepancy between them, though they are independent, and we have found no ground whatever to question their being the work of one author.

Kautzsch and Socin distinguish four authors in the first two chapters of Genesis, and one tablet has to be divided between two or three. On the contrary, we have noticed that each tablet is a whole which unfolds itself quite logically, and that so-called repetitions from another form the introduction necessary in order that the tablet may be well understood.

Why should Moses not be the author, as he is said to be by the tradition of many centuries? Why should his tablets not have been preserved just as much as Hammurabi's code, or the letters of the Palestinian governors? I am convinced that the fact of the Pentateuch having originally been written on cuneiform tablets, when new discoveries shall have confirmed the information which we have already derived from the fact, will be a fatal blow struck at Wellhausen's theory, and that it will be the end of the "Rainbow Bible," of the picture with variegated colours, each one representing an author whose name, origin and date are absolutely unknown, and whose conjectural existence is based merely on a literary criticism which is quite irrelevant since it is not applied to an original text.

The Garden of Eden and the Land of Egypt

The tablet of the creation of mankind gives the description of the Garden of Eden, out of the ground of which

the Lord God " made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." We noticed that this luxuriant vegetation was due, not to rain, but to a river which " went out of the garden to water Eden " and afterwards divided itself into four branches described at some length. This seems to reveal an author who knew Egypt, the fertility of which proceeded, and still proceeds, not from rain, but from its magnificent river. Moses had Egypt before his eyes ; that country was for him the type of the most fertile and rich land which he could imagine.

We find an allusion to Egypt in another passage also ; in Genesis xiii. 10. Abram has come out of Egypt with his nephew Lot. Their herdsmen quarrel, and in order that there should be no strife, Abram tells Lot that they must separate, and that he may go to the right or to the left. Lot lifts up his eyes and beholds " all the Plain of Jordan that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as thou goest unto Zoar."

It seems natural to connect this passage with the description of Eden. The Plain of Jordan is well watered, like the garden which the Lord prepared for man, and also like the land of Egypt " as thou goest unto Zoar." Surely the two descriptions must be by the same author.

The critics have cut them up between various writers. The description of Eden is by the Jahvist, except what is said of the river ; that belongs to the redactor. In the thirteenth chapter the verse quoted above is also by the Jahvist, but the words " like the land of Egypt " are put down as a late gloss, the author of which is not known. On the contrary, we shall see that these words belong to the old Mosaic text.

This conjecture of the critics is due to a confusion in the vowel points of the Massora, which resulted in their

not distinguishing two quite different cities of Zoar. Undoubtedly there was a City of Zoar south of the Dead Sea, in Moab. There Lot took refuge after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is mentioned in Deuteronomy (xxxiv. 4) as the southern point of the view before the eyes of Moses, and also by the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. There is what is called a popular etymology of the name in what Lot says to the angel, "Oh, let me escape thither, is it not a little one? . . . therefore the name of the city was called Zoar," which means "little." The LXX always transcribe the City of Moab Segor, Σήγωρ. This city was separated from Egypt by the whole Sinaitic desert, so it cannot be meant in the passage of chapter xiii.

"Like the land of Egypt as thou goest unto Zoar" refers to a quite different city, which the LXX read Zogora: *Ζογορα*, the Egyptian Zar. This city is well known. It was on the most eastern branch of the Nile, the Pelusiac. Not only do we find it mentioned in many inscriptions, but we have a picture of it in one of the sculptures representing the campaign of King Seti I, of the Nineteenth Dynasty, against the populations of the Sinaitic peninsula and the southern part of Palestine. It was called a fortress, and we see that it consisted of pylons and towers on both sides of the river, joined by a bridge. It has long ago been identified with the present Kantarah (*the bridge*), one of the stations on the Suez Canal which used to be, and was till quite lately, one of the entrances into Egypt for the caravans coming from Palestine. Inscriptions lately discovered have confirmed the identification of Zar with the site of Kantarah. The road from Egypt to Canaan through Zar was the most northerly one. There was another more southerly one through Pithom, of which we shall have to speak further. Zar was con-

sidered as the limit of Egypt on that side as late as the Ptolemies. Its name in Egyptian contains a sign indicating that it is a foreign word. On the east was the desert where, here and there, the Pharaohs had dug wells and built towers and stations on the road to Canaan ; but it was neither so well-watered nor so well cultivated as the land on the west.

The western part of the Delta between the Tanitic and Pelusiac branches was a very rich land. As late as the fourth century a Christian pilgrim, Silvia Aquitana, describing it, says that when she journeyed along the Nile (the Pelusiac branch) she went " through vineyards which produced wine, and vineyards producing balsam, through orchards extremely well cultivated, fields and gardens. What more ? I do not think I ever saw a more beautiful territory." Although the good lady, who is a perfect type of many tourists of the present day, believes whatever is said to her by her guides and sees the old Israelites everywhere, the description she gives of that part of the country is most interesting. It is a striking illustration, given quite unintentionally, of the passage in Genesis.

That part of the country has changed considerably since Silvia Aquitana's journey. The silting up of the Pelusiac and Tanitic branches, the formation of Lake Menzaleh, due to the sinking of the ground, have destroyed the former beauty of the land. A few years ago the ruins of the great city of Tanis could only be reached by going across marshes and a swampy country, the quite barren white soil of which is the salt land, the type of sterility for the Psalms and for Jeremiah. Evidently that part of the Delta is quite different from what it was even in Ptolemaic times. Canals are now being dug there in order to restore to that region part at least of its ancient fruitfulness.

The passage : " like the garden of the Lord, like the

land of Egypt as thou goest unto Zoar," is extremely embarrassing for the critics. It is supposed to have been written by the Jahvist who lived in the kingdom of Judah in the ninth century (B.C.). In that case, there is absolutely no reason for speaking of Egypt, a country far distant and unknown to the inhabitants of Judea. In comparing the land of Sodom and Gomorrah with another which was particularly beautiful, it is obvious that the writer must have chosen a region which his readers knew, so that they might judge how far his comparison was true. He has first spoken of the garden of the Lord, which I have no hesitation in considering as being Eden, the ideal type of fruitfulness and beauty. Eden had never been seen by any of the contemporaries of the writer, so he must choose a country which they might see: Egypt.

Then the author cannot have been one who lived in Judea. His comparison would not in that case have appealed in the least to his readers. Supposing it made in our time by a Scotch preacher to his congregation, it would come to this: like the garden of the Lord, like Normandy as thou goest to Le Havre. What kind of impression would such a comparison make upon Scotch hearers?

Most of the critics consider the words, "like the land of Egypt," as a gloss. We shall not inquire whether there is any reason for inserting this gloss into the text since this insertion makes the sentence quite incongruous. For Zoar is always considered by them as being the city south of the Dead Sea; therefore on the way to Zoar thou dost not go through the well-watered land of Egypt, but, on the contrary, through a waterless desert; so that the whole passage is quite inconsistent and meaningless.

It is not much clearer when, with Kautzsch and Socin, we strike out the gloss and translate: like the paradise as far as Zoar. The paradise does not exist; how can there be a way from that garden towards Zoar? Other critics suppose that the Upper Jordan valley is the Garden of the Lord. But we do not think that this name is ever applied to the Jordan valley; besides, going from there to Zoar it was necessary to skirt the Dead Sea, the very region which had been destroyed. How then could this be the second term of the comparison? I need not dwell longer on the utter inability of the critics to give a reasonable explanation of this sentence unless they correct the text. Some of their translations are absolutely meaningless.

There seems to be only one way to solve the difficulty, and to interpret the sentence as it is, without striking out anything. But before coming to Egypt, let us begin with "the Garden of the Lord." In my opinion, this cannot be anything else than the Garden of Eden, the magnificent dwelling which the Lord had devised and prepared for man. The author has before his eyes the vision of the glorious creation of the Lord described in another tablet. The land of Sodom and Gomorrah was a true Eden. This comparison has for Moses a majesty and a nobleness which it has lost entirely in modern times, since the name Eden has been prostituted to hotels and *cafés-chantants*.

But no one except Adam had been in Eden. The author himself knows its existence only from tradition, or from some early documents which had been preserved unto his time. In order that his comparison may be really telling for his contemporaries, he must quote something which they have before their eyes; and this is the land of Egypt. Zoar, the Egyptian Zar, is the fortress on the

frontier, it is the place where Egypt ended. On the eastern side of the Pelusiac branch the country is no longer Egypt, it is the desert. The fertile and beautiful land is on the west, so that the sentence means, as the LXX and the Coptic read "like the land of Egypt, until thou reachest Zoar": ὡς ἡ γῆ Αἰγύπτου ἕως ἐλθεῖν εἰς Ζόγορα. There is no possible misunderstanding, the sentence is written for a man who lives in Egypt and who goes towards the border-city of Zoar. How then can the author be a writer in the kingdom of Judah? For this does not apply to a traveller going from Judea to Egypt. It is just the reverse. At Zoar Egypt ends; west of it, towards Judea, there is the desert inhabited by the nomads called the Shasu.

Let us now revert to the Israelites in Egypt. This beautiful country is contiguous to the land of Goshen where they reside. Probably a great number of them know it, perhaps they know the city of Zoar on the way to Canaan with which they may have intercourse of some kind. Does any explanation account better for the meaning of this sentence than that Moses was its author, and that the tablet relating this episode of Abram's life was written before Moses left Egypt?

As we said before, there seems to be such a strong connection between this passage and the description of Eden, that it shows the hand of one single author for both tablets. This is also the opinion of the critics, except that they take out of the tablet of man's creation the description of the river watering the Garden of Eden, and out of this tablet the words "like the land of Egypt." For the second time we notice that the suppression of so-called interpolations or glosses destroys entirely the drift of the passage; and in this case takes away from the sentence all reasonable sense. Thus in these short

passages: the description of the river in Eden, and this comparison concerning the state of the land before the destruction of the cities, while the critics trace there different authors, we find only Moses writing in Egypt.

Ham and Canaan

The tenth chapter of Genesis, "the generations of the sons of Noah," is one which has been most discussed by the critics, who attribute it to various writers. We shal consider here only one verse, (6) "And the sons of Ham, Cush and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan."

There is no doubt about Mizraim, the ordinary name for Egypt. As for Cush, it is generally translated Ethiopia, the region of the Upper Nile, above Egypt. Certainly this was the meaning of the name of Cush in later times, as we know from Egyptian inscriptions; but in the chapter of Genesis where we find the origin and the first dwelling of the various branches of mankind, it seems established by the works of Assyrian scholars that Cush is Northern Arabia, "especially the district around Djebel Shammar." [1]

Phut, as Rougé first pointed out, is the incense country of Punt situated on both sides of the Red Sea. The Egyptian inscriptions place it either south or east of Egypt, the real position being south-east.

One of the reasons for attacking the authenticity of chapter x. is the name Canaan. Canaan being the residence of the Phoenicians and the Hebrews, who both spoke a Semitic language, the first ancestor of the inhabitants cannot be a son of Ham. He must be a Semite. Therefore they say that the list is certainly erroneous on that point.

Anthropology has now taught us, by unassailable facts,

[1] *Hommel in Hilprecht*: *Explorations in Bible Lands*, p. 742.

that language and race are far from being identical and that language is no sure criterion of the ethnical type of those who speak it. If we look at the Egypt of the present day, where nothing but Arabic is spoken by the fellaheen, we should say that the Egyptians are a Semitic population. Yet Greek had been so generally adopted until the Mohammedan conquest, especially as a written language, and for documents of all kinds that, if we used the same argument as the Hebrew scholars use about Hebrew and which we controverted in the preceding chapter, we should say that the Egyptians spoke Greek, and therefore they belonged to the Indo-European stock. In this case we can trace when the change of language took place and we know the original idiom.

Not so with the old Asiatic nations about which we have very scanty information, especially considering that a conquest may have influenced language in many ways. In ancient as well as in modern times, if the conquest brought a change in the religion the original language was immediately affected. For example we see that the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs having resulted in the destruction of Christianity and the substitution of the mosque for the church, a change of language followed at once: Arabic took the place of Coptic. The Christianized Egyptian, the Coptic, remained only in families where the Christian faith was preserved. It is still a religious language, the language of the Church; but since the end of the seventeenth century it is dead as a spoken idiom. In the same way Arabic superseded the North African languages, it follows in the steps of the Mohammedan religion. The tribes which have kept their idiom are those whose Mohammedanism is merely nominal. The same also with Turkish. In the empire of the Sultan it is the language of the conquerors, the followers of the

prophet, who often forced their belief upon their subjects by the sword.

If we go back to Egypt, we find no trace of the language of the Hyksos, who occupied the country for several centuries, and who were certainly an Asiatic nation, coming, according to all probability, directly from Asia. They had another religion than the Egyptians. "They reigned ignoring Ra," as a papyrus says; and this was one of the reasons why they were the objects of the hatred of the natives. But they did not enforce their worship on the Egyptians. On the contrary, they seem to have adopted more and more the religion of the country they had conquered, building temples on the same principle and having the names of their kings enclosed in two cartouches, one of which is introduced by the religious title "son of Ra." The same happened at the Assyrian conquest. Esar-haddon did not build in Egypt sanctuaries to his gods, his religion did not conquer the worship of Amon and Osiris. Therefore the language remained the same.

We see also in antiquity, as well as in our time, that the same language may be written by nations or tribes belonging to different races, as is shown by the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna. The population of Palestine was certainly not homogeneous as to race and origin, neither was it entirely Semitic; nevertheless the governors of the various cities wrote only a Semitic language; and certainly it would be a great mistake to draw an ethnological conclusion from this fact.

Assuming that the whole population of Canaan spoke Semitic, it would not follow that it was a Semitic race. I should even say that the scanty indications which have been preserved lead us to the opposite idea. It is said that Canaan begat Zidon his first-born, and Heth. "And

the border of the Canaanite was from Zidon as thou goest towards Gerar and Gaza, as thou goest towards Sodom and Gomorrah. . . ." The territory of the Canaanite is described by this passage as being in the first place the fertile plain along the sea, from Zidon to Gaza, and then turning at a right angle, it extends over Southern Palestine and Judea as far as the Dead Sea, this part of the country being inhabited by the Jebusites, the Amorites and the Girgashites, evidently the descendants of Heth, while six others, being in the north, must be the sons of Zidon.

Whenever the text sums up the description of the posterity of one of the sons, it adds: "Nations divided in their lands every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations" . . . or "after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, in their nations," showing that the dispersion implies not only different lands, but also different tongues. These passages do not lead to the theoretical idea which has prevailed too long in philology, as to Indo-European and Semitic languages, of a typical mother-tongue whence dialects should have diverged. On the contrary they agree with the idea now advocated by anthropology, of the diversity of language being simultaneous with the dispersion, so that one does not know where to find the mother-tongue. The further back we go, the greater is the variety, as with the primitive people of the present day.

We learn from the Egyptian inscriptions that the Sinaitic peninsula was first inhabited by a population called the *Anu Mentu*. There are several branches of Anu which are all African nations, inhabitants of Nubia, and of the countries bordering Egypt on the west; they occupied also the valley of the Nile itself, where their name has remained in that of *An On*, Heliopolis. They are cer-

tainly not Semites. They are a Hamitic population, sons of Ham as much as are the Egyptians. It is quite possible that the Anu Mentu, the population of the Sinaitic peninsula, may have marched further north and have occupied also the southern part of Palestine, the mountains of Judea, where the tenth chapter of Genesis locates the sons of Ham. Those who were in the beautiful and fertile plain along the sea might easily push further north as far as Zidon.

On the coast, also, we find the Philistines. We do not know exactly when they settled in the country to which they gave their name. The most recent excavations tend to show that they came from Crete, and also that the civilization of this great island is closely related to that of Egypt. The first inhabitants of Crete were undoubtedly not Semites; nor do they seem to have been Aryans; so that here again, even if the Philistines were already settled in Canaan at the time when this tablet was written, that part of the country was inhabited by descendants of Ham.

But we have other indications that the Phoenicians did not originally inhabit the coast of Palestine. Herodotus says twice that they came from the Red Sea. It is probable that by that name we must not understand the whole of the present Red Sea. The northern part of the Gulf of Suez is for Herodotus the Arabian Gulf; so that the name Red Sea may have extended to part of the Indian Ocean and perhaps to the Persian Gulf. This seems to connect them with some Cushite nations which were settled on both sides of the present Red Sea. Lepsius explained the Latin name of Poeni and the Greek φοίνιξ by that of the inhabitants of Punt, whose name he read *Puna*, which most Egyptologists read *Punti*, and which I read *Puni*. The assimilation made by Lepsius has to

be considered seriously, in spite of the contempt with which it has been treated by some German scholars. According to this opinion, the Phoenicians would have to be reckoned as belonging to the posterity of Phut, one of the sons of Ham.

The tenth chapter of Genesis raises difficult questions in reference to original authorship. We can understand the Hebrews having preserved the tradition concerning the creation of the world, or that of mankind. Even the flood may be one of those popular narratives handed on from father to son, through many generations. Nearly all nations have traditions of that kind which are put down in writing, sometimes very long after they originated. It is not at all impossible that the Israelites had these traditions before Abram left Mesopotamia, especially since they were intimately connected with Abram's worship. For we must not consider Abram's migration into Canaan as that of a single family. It must have been that of a tribe of some importance, since we see that on the occasion of the war of the Mesopotamian kings against the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah Abram led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, so that he must have been a chief having a power worthy to be compared with that of the rulers among whom he settled.

If now we try to find the reason which induced Terah to take his son Abram and his grandson Lot to go to Canaan, stopping first at Haran ; and afterwards Abram to take Lot as his companion and to choose as his abode the South of Canaan, it is hardly possible to find for that migration any other cause but religion. These words : " Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee . . . So Abram

went, as the Lord had spoken unto him" (Gen. xii. 1) seem to show that his worship was not that of his family, and that he went to Canaan, to a country where he could practise his own religion without incurring the enmity of those who were not followers of the same worship. Applying to the Abrahamites a modern name, we should call them a sect.

A sect naturally must have its religious books, relating its origin. It has some documents showing whence it comes and how it was born. In fact the first eleven chapters of Genesis are nothing but the generation of Abram, beginning at the first man. They are his pedigree. These chapters may have been written on tablets brought from Haran, which Moses used or copied. He may have chosen from among a larger number those which best answered his purpose. The fact of these tablets having been written in Mesopotamia accounts for their similarity to the Assyrian documents on the deluge or even on creation, a similarity upon which so many theories have lately been based.

A few tablets may easily have been carried by nomads even to a great distance, as were the letters written by the governors of Palestinian cities, or the kings of Babylon to Amenophis III in Egypt. Especially would this be the case if the Abrahamites gave them a religious value; if these tablets were for them a kind of title-deed showing that they were the tribe set apart to call upon the Name of the Lord and be faithful to the worship of Yahveh Elohim, the people with whom the Lord would make a covenant, and in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed; surely they would take special care of them, and value them as a treasure.

As we said before, these early tablets, which were left by Moses as a collection of independent documents, were prob-

ably put into book form by Ezra when he turned them into Aramaic. He may have added or inserted a few glosses so that his book might be better understood by his contemporaries; for instance, it is doubtful whether the Philistines were known under that name at the time when the tablet was written; but here, again, there is no reason for dividing this chapter between three or four absolutely unknown authors.

The tablet describing the posterity of Noah began with these words (x. 1): "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah." It ended with verse 32, which is the end of the chapter: "These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and of these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood." This sums up the genealogy, and teaches us that the division of the nations took place after the flood. We must remember that all this is written, not by a historian who considers it his duty to record all events which took place at a certain time or in a certain country, but by an author who has a quite different aim in view. He has to show how everything is directed towards the choice of Abraham and his posterity as the elect.

"These three were the sons of Noah: and of these was the whole earth overspread" (ix. 19), says the tablet of the deluge. "Of these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood," (x. 32) are the closing words of the tablet which we have just considered. In the following one we learn how this division took place. The narrative begins with the necessary introduction. The author goes back to what happened immediately after the flood. There was a time when the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. But when men tried to build the Tower of Babel, the Lord confounded their languages and scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth. Now in

this vast confusion of nations and languages, where could be found the chosen ones, those who were set apart? They spring from one of the sons of Shem; therefore the writer reverts to this son of Noah, and to part of his descent which he has mentioned before, in another tablet. Arpachshad was the ancestor of the elect, and the writer enumerates all his descendants as far as Abraham and to the death of Terah, Abraham's father.

If we remember that this is a tablet not linked in writing to another as two consecutive chapters of a book; if we take it as a piece of literature standing by itself, we cannot but recognize that there is an intimate connexion between the two parts which, at first sight, are so dissimilar. There is no inconsistency. The genealogy of Terah is the necessary sequel to the description of the chaos of mankind. It is the leading thread which will bring us out of this confusion to Abraham's family. Therefore I cannot understand how it can be attributed to three different authors, two of whom would be separated by several hundred of years, and one about whom the critics have a very indistinct idea.

I consider that this is the last of the tablets brought from Mesopotamia. It is quite possible that the first writer gave them a somewhat different form. Moses may have modified them in some respects. We find the trace of his hand in the passage about the Garden of Eden and the land of Egypt. He evidently had these old documents, and embodied them in his own tablets in which he recorded either events preserved by tradition, like the history of Joseph, or those which took place in his time and of which he could speak as an eyewitness.

Abraham

One of the striking features of Genesis is the complete

lack of proportion. Some events are described at great length, others are entirely left alone. For instance, except a few names, giving us the generations of Shem, there is nothing between the dispersion of mankind and Abraham's migration to Canaan. We have no account whatever of the reason why Terah was called to leave Ur with part of his family to settle in Haran, and why he did not go further, but remained there until his death.

We must not consider Genesis as an ordinary book of history. History as we understand it now did not exist at that time. The idea of recording what had taken place in ancient times merely for the sake of preserving the recollection of the past did not occur to these old writers. When they related what had happened many centuries before their time, it was with a definite purpose ; it was to illustrate something they had at heart and which had for them a special importance.

What constitutes the admirable unity of Genesis, although it consists of separate parts not joined together like the chapters of a book, and what is utterly disregarded and even destroyed by the critics, is that from the beginning every narrative is chosen so as to show how Israel is set apart from the rest of mankind. The reason of that choice is that a special duty will be laid upon Israel, it will have a primary task to fulfil : the mission of worshipping Yahveh-Elohim, and of having no other God but Him. Everything tends towards that central idea from the very beginning. The first tablets which we showed could be traced lead us towards what we may call the cornerstone of the history of the Israelites. It is remarkable how everything which has no bearing on that dominating fact, the setting apart of Israel, is passed over rapidly or left entirely out.

First comes the creation of heaven and earth, then that of man and his generations ; those are mentioned with

hardly any detail. Noah is set apart and saved from the destruction of the men who had been wicked and corrupt. The deluge and the preservation of Noah is related at great length ; the Lord made a covenant with Noah, and we are taught how mankind was renewed from the families of his three sons. They are scattered abroad, and are divided into three branches, each bearing the name of one of Noah's sons and described after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, in their nations. In that restored humanity one branch only is chosen, that of Shem ; among his descendants one family only, that of Arpachsad, and from his numerous sons and daughters, those who will be the ancestors of Terah, the father of Abram.

We shall not hear any more either of the posterity of Japheth or Ham, nor of the other descendants of Shem. They are quite useless for the history of Israel.

Since this narrative is not written in a book, but on tablets, there are what I may call literary irregularities, repetitions and other failures against the rules set down by masters in the art of writing. These literary faults have been the stumbling-block of the critics, and have driven them to that mincing process, to that cutting up of Genesis into small pieces due to various authors from different places and separated sometimes by several centuries. This destroys completely the unity of the book, it hides this higher conception on which it rests. Minute philological analysis has obscured to the critics the true scope and purport of the book. It has deafened their ears to the leading note, though that note sounds in it from beginning to end.

" Now the Lord said unto Abram (xii. 1) : Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and

make thy name great." As I said before, this seems to show clearly that it was a religious reason which drove Abraham out of his country. His migration is connected with a blessing, and a blessing generally implies the promise of multiplying and of giving birth to a numerous posterity.

Abram is the man with whom the Lord made a special covenant. He, above all others, is considered by the Israelites as their ancestor. Therefore his life is described at great length, as well as the various episodes which show how God set him apart and promised him repeatedly that he should be the father of a great nation. Not only do we find here the outward events of his life, such as the deliverance of Lot from the hands of the Mesopotamian kings, but the writer of the tablets shows us what we may call his religious character, his peculiar intercourse with God, which is revealed by the sacrifice of Isaac, or by the marvellous sort of discussion which Abram had with God about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. These two striking episodes, wherein is brought forward in so vivid a way the moral and religious life of Abraham, are attributed by the critics to two different writers ; what I have called the discussion with God to the Jahvist and the sacrifice of Isaac to the Elohist who wrote one century later in the Northern Kingdom, the Jahvist residing in Judea. They must have both painted for themselves Abraham's character with very similar colours, since both wrote fragments which fitted so well into the literary construction raised by the redactor !

Here a question occurs naturally to our minds which I shall have other occasions to repeat : Where did these two authors get the traditions on which they based their narrative ?—for we cannot suppose that they are romances of their invention. There must have been in each kingdom a

tradition very similar, I might even say identical, though the writers who recorded them did not live in the same country, and wrote at a different time. How could these two traditions correspond so well to each other? Who were those authors? What was their purpose in writing books of which short fragments only have been preserved? Even if we admitted the existence of these two writers it would be hardly possible to suppose that they had not at their disposal an old document from which they both borrowed the facts of their narratives.

The supposition which seems to me the most reasonable is that these recollections of Abraham's life were preserved by his descendants, and perhaps partly put in writing, until Moses collected and re-wrote them. In the drift of the narrative we find many Mosaic touches. Moses shares the same feelings with Abraham and the same faith. He has the same familiar intercourse with God. One may well fancy that it is the same man who wrote Abram's requests about Sodom and Gomorrah, when he dared not plead for less than than six men, and Moses's own prayer when on the border of Canaan he besought the Lord, saying: "Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan," and received the answer: "Let it suffice thee, speak no more unto Me of this matter."

Genesis not being an historical book, but a number of tablets put together, it is not necessary that we should always find a strict chronological order. Some parts may be a summary of previous events in a man's life. For instance, the last chapter, which refers to Abraham, begins with these words (xxv): "And Abraham took another wife, and her name was Keturah," and the text goes on to give the list of all Abraham's sons whose mother was Keturah. This tablet gave Abraham's posterity exclusive of Isaac's descendants. We must picture to ourselves

Abraham as one of those great nomadic chieftains; what we should now call a sheikh. With those men, polygamy was the rule, as it still is. One of their wives was the predominant one; she had special rights, and her sons were the heirs; but a powerful and rich man might have slaves and concubines, wives of a lower rank, whose children would receive gifts, like the children of Keturah, while all that Abraham had was given to Isaac.

We must not think therefore that Keturah became Abraham's wife only after Sarah's death. She is mentioned at the beginning of the tablet which relates the patriarch's end and which gives the list of his posterity. We do not know when Abraham took Keturah. Here the author of the tablet recalls something in the past, as we have already seen several times. It seems to me that the true meaning would be better rendered if we translated also here: Abraham had taken another wife.

As for Ishmael, he alone is mentioned with Isaac as being Abraham's son. These brothers alone buried their father, though there were many others. The explanation of this fact lies in the circumstances of Ishmael's birth. We see here that Saraï transfers her rights to Hagar: "It may be that I shall obtain children by her." Therefore she will consider Hagar's children as her own, and when once such an utterance had been made to Abraham, and probably before Hagar herself, it could not be withdrawn. Saraï alone could use such language, since she had the privileges of which Abraham could not despoil her, for it rested on blood-kinship. Saraï was Abraham's half-sister. This kind of marriage is often seen in Egypt, especially in the royal family. A king liked to marry his half-sister because in that case his son had a right to the throne on both sides. Between Isaac and Ishmael there was the same difference as between two Egyptian princes, one of

whom is the son of a queen who entitles herself royal wife and royal sister and the other of whom has royal blood only through his father. In that case the king often confers through association with his son the rights which this son has not got from his mother's side. Saraï substitutes Hagar for herself, and though she repents of it afterwards, and obtains from Abraham the dismissal of Hagar, still Ishmael comes next to Isaac and above his other brothers.

Hagar, who twice in her flight took the road to Egypt, probably wishing to return to her own country, receives the promise that her son will become a great nation. She takes for him a wife from her own people, and Ishmael settles in the desert south of Canaan and also in the northern part of Arabia. His descendants may have been the Shasu, the nomads who, at the time of the Nineteenth Dynasty, were the enemies of Seti I and against whom he made his first campaign.

Abraham, Isaac and Abimelech

There is a narrative which occurs three times in Genesis under very similar but not quite identical circumstances. This narrative also has been a stumbling-block for the critics. The first time that Abram goes to Egypt, because there was a famine in Canaan, he says to Saraï his wife (xii. 11): "Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon, and it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife, and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me, for thy sake, and that my soul may live because of thee." Saraï does as she is commanded to do, and she is taken into Pharaoh's house. But Pharaoh and his people are stricken by great plagues, and they hasten to send Abram away, with plenty of sheep and oxen, and he-asses

and menservants and maidservants, and she-asses and camels. He was not to remain in the land.

A second time Abram does the same thing. Many years afterwards, when both he and his wife were advanced in age, after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (xx.) he goes to sojourn in Gerar. Again he says of his wife: "She is my sister," and Abimelech, the King of Gerar, takes her. But warned in a dream, he immediately restores Sarah to her husband, and when he questions Abraham why he has deceived him, he receives this curious answer: "It came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother."

The third episode of the same kind is in Isaac's life (xxvi). A famine occurs; Isaac would feel tempted to do as his father did, to go to Egypt, where there was corn in abundance, but the Lord appears to him, and he is told to dwell in the land. He therefore goes to Gerar to Abimelech, who must have been the son of the king who had known Abraham. Isaac also likewise says of Rebekah: "She is my sister," for he feared to say "my wife." But Abimelech discovers that she is Isaac's wife and reproaches him for having deceived him. Isaac does not leave Abimelech's country, but he increases so much in wealth and power, that Abimelech says unto him: "Go from us, for thou art most mightier than we." Thereupon we hear of the quarrel between the herdsmen of Gerar and those of Isaac because of the wells.

The critics have attributed the journey of Abram to Egypt to the Jahvist, the episode with Abimelech to the old Elohist writing about 750, and the narrative of Isaac and Abimelech again to the Jahvist with fragments belonging to the redactor. Undoubtedly these repetitions

are difficult, and one may well understand the critics being tempted to see there the hands of several writers ; especially in the case of Abram. If one gives to these stories their most obvious interpretation, it seems that Abram hopes that the beauty of his wife will save him and prevent him from being murdered. This is well in keeping with Abram's journey to Egypt, but not at all with his arrival in Abimelech's territory. In that case one might well suppose that the cuneiform tablets had not been arranged in chronological order, and that this had to be placed earlier in Abram's life.

But I believe there is another explanation, agreeing much better with the circumstances of these three cases. It seems to me to solve the greatest difficulties which stand in the way of the critics.

We see that among the ancient eastern rulers, the pledge, we might say the living pledge, of a treaty of peace between two nations was a marriage or rather the gift of a female relative of one of the kings to the other. If we look at the tablets on Tel-el-Amarna, in the letters of Dushratta the king of Mitanni to Amenophis III and Amenophis IV, father and son, we see the importance which the foreign king gives to these marriages with Giluhipa his sister and Taduhipa his daughter.

Dushratta begins one of his letters with these words : " To Nimmuria (Amenophis III), king of Egypt, my brother. It is well with me, may it be well with you, with Giluhipa my sister, may it be well with your house, your wives, your sons." He singles out his sister among the wives of Amenophis III. He will say the same thing of Taduhipa who is his daughter : " May it be well with you, with my daughter Taduhipa, your wife whom you love, may it be well with your wives, your sons . . . " Evidently Taduhipa had taken the place of her aunt in the royal

harem. She is said to be the wife of Amenophis III, and the word wife is the same as that used when he mentions others. Curiously when Dushratta writes to Amenophis IV he uses exactly the same language as he had done towards Amenophis III, his father, when speaking of his daughter: May it be well with you, with your houses, your mother Ti and the land of Egypt, my daughter Taduhipa your wife, your other wives, your sons . . ."

In one of his letters to Amenophis IV, Dushratta relates how Nimmuria's father (Thothmes IV) sent to Artatama his grandfather, " and for his daughter made request, my grandfather refused. Five or six times he sent, but at no time did he give her, and then when forced he gave her." When Amenophis III sent to Shutarna, Dushratta's father, as king, for his daughter, Dushratta's sister, " he never gave her . . . five or six times he sent, and then forced he gave her." Nimmuria makes the same request to Dushratta. He asks for his daughter. Dushratta first refuses and makes some difficulties about the price the king of Egypt is to pay. Finally he agrees, and sends her with a dowry which was countless. The princess was conveyed by a messenger who had to pay the dowry of Taduhipa. When Amenophis III saw her he rejoiced very greatly and made her beautiful presents.

As far as one can judge, Amenophis III had not Taduhipa long in his harem. Dushratta writes further: " When my brother Nimmuria died, . . . when Naphuria (Amenophis IV) the distinguished son of Nimmuria by his distinguished wife Ti entered upon his reign, I spoke saying: Nimmuria is not dead, Naphuria his distinguished son by his distinguished wife Ti is in his stead. He will not change from its place one word from what it was before." This means in the first place that he will take over Taduhipa, and give her the same position as she had under her

father, and henceforth we see in his letters that he always calls Taduhipa the wife of Amenophis IV who had thus inherited her from his father.

These letters show the real character of these marriages. The princesses were the living pledges of friendship, a kind of hostages which had to be renewed at the beginning of a reign. Amenophis III asks first for Shutarna's daughter, Giluhipa. After Shutarna's death, when Dushratta is on the throne, he also asks for Dushratta's daughter Taduhipa. Amenophis III dies and Dushratta contrives that his daughter should be for the son exactly what she had been for the father, his so-called "wife." We must notice that in nearly all cases the king of Mitanni yields only when he is "forced." This looks very much as if his daughter had been taken violently, or as if he could not resist the threats of the king of Egypt who would have considered him as hostile, as an enemy, if he had not given his daughter.

The correspondence of Amenophis III with Kallima-Sin, king of Babylonia, turns almost entirely on marriages of this kind. Even Buznaburiash, who corresponds with Amenophis IV, also speaks of his daughter being sent to the king of Egypt. This custom must certainly have been very old in Babylonia, and Abraham, who was a native of that country, must have known of it.

This same custom prevailed also amongst kings who were not Mesopotamians. When, after long wars in which his successes were certainly not so great as he boasts, Rameses II at last made peace with the Hittites, the token of friendship between the two rulers was a princess, the daughter of the king of Kheta who is seen on a tablet of the temple of Aboo Simbel coming to Egypt. She is accompanied by her father.

A custom so general among the eastern sovereigns must

have been adopted also by the chiefs of tribes. When we think of Abram leaving Mesopotamia, we must not imagine a single family numbering only a few heads. Abram was very likely a sheikh, the head of a tribe sufficiently numerous to provide him with a troop strong enough to rescue Lot from the Mesopotamian kings.

Abram left his country for a religious reason. Probably his faith differed from that of his countrymen. He was going abroad to lands where he supposed he would find a strange worship, and of which he would say: Surely the fear of God is not in this place. Therefore, from the first he made to Sarai the following request. I quote his words (Gen. xx. 13): "And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother." This was a request made once for all; he did not say so in view of Egypt only, but for every new place to which his wandering life might lead him. He expected that there might be several occasions when this statement on the part of Sarai would be useful to him, and he instructed her accordingly at the moment of his departure.

We shall not consider here the moral side of Abram's conduct; we shall only try to discover the reason which induced him to act in this way.

One can imagine that in a time of famine the king of Egypt was afraid of seeing a powerful tribe approaching his frontier. He knew that his kingdom had often suffered from the nomads of the desert, and he might well doubt for what purpose these strangers came to the valley of the Nile. Were they hostile invaders, or people who came with peaceful intentions? Were they a tribe with whom an alliance might be made and whose friendship might be

guaranteed by the marriage of a daughter of the sheikh with the king of Egypt ?

Abram had no daughter from Sarai ; he could not, like the chief of Kheta, send to the king of Egypt a daughter of his own family on her mother's as well as her father's side, following himself in her train. He therefore says that Sarai is his sister. He does not actually offer Sarai to the king of Egypt, but he uses this artifice in order to show to the Egyptians that he comes to them as a friend, as a man ready to seal his friendship by a marriage, to contract an alliance with them. Sarai saves his life in that way. Otherwise the Egyptians would have considered him and his tribe as enemies, and would have killed him ; and if they struck the sheikh, the head of the tribe, the tribesmen would soon have been scattered or subdued.

Evidently the Egyptians were rather afraid of Abram's power. When they saw that the marriage could not take place, and that the friendship of Abram could not be guaranteed, they hastened to send him away, making him all sorts of presents, perhaps on condition that he would leave the country. The king in the narrative seems rather impatient that he should go : " Now therefore behold thy wife, take her and go thy way. And Pharaoh gave men charge concerning him ; and they brought him on the way, and his wife and all that he had."

Something very similar happened with Abimelech (Gen. xx). The king of Gerar took Sarah in good faith, evidently in order to be assured of Abraham's friendship. Having as his wife the sister of the sheikh, he might feel certain that there would be no hostile feeling from his tribesmen. In fact when he also discovers that he cannot marry Sarah, he contracts a kind of alliance with Abraham, makes him presents, and says: " Behold my land is before thee, dwell where it pleaseth thee." Afterwards the two men make a regular covenant.

If we consider Abraham's conduct in that light, and if we remember that these two incidents are the results of a general instruction given to Sarai by Abram when they first departed from Mesopotamia, there is nothing extraordinary that they should occur twice in Abraham's life under similar circumstances.

The third similar occurrence is in Isaac's life. (ch. xxvi) The country again suffers from famine and Isaac goes unto Abimelech in Gerar. The critics attribute this narrative to the Jahvist, but they strike out the reference to Abraham in the first verse of the chapter, the warning not to go to Egypt and the repetition of the promises made to Abraham. All this is attributed to the redactor.

This summary way of dealing with the text seems to me again to show a lack of understanding of the whole history. And the Lord appeared unto him and said: "Sojourn in this land." It is quite natural that the Lord should explain to Isaac why he is to remain at Gerar. The Lord repeats to him all the blessings promised to Abraham, which appear here for the first time in the narrative of Isaac's life; they had not yet been uttered to him in such a distinct way. The Lord then renews with Isaac the alliance made with Abraham, and since Abraham is quoted several times and Isaac might feel tempted to do as his father had done, there is nothing extraordinary that Isaac should be warned not to go to Egypt, but to stay in the fertile land of Gerar. Later, his son Jacob will be specially told to go down to Egypt.

The verses struck out by the critics are of primary importance; they are among those to which Moses must have given the greatest weight. They constitute Isaac as the rightful heir to Abraham; not the heir merely of his wealth and riches, but the heir to the promises—"For unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these lands, and I will

establish the oath which I sware to Abraham thy father." This is not said anywhere else to Isaac in so many words. There is only an allusion to it a little further on. It is the charter given by the Lord to His chosen people. This is the part which the critics assume not to belong to the original narrative!

When Isaac arrived in Abimelech's land, the repetition of what had happened before with Abimelech's father must again be construed as something different from a mere fancy for a woman "fair to look upon." Like his father, Isaac stayed in the land, a rich country which the Egyptians called Zahi, and from whence they drew corn. There he became so great, his flocks and herds grew to such an extent, that Abimelech asked him to depart, and, being afraid on account of a quarrel which arose between the men about the wells, asked Isaac to make a covenant with him that he would do him no hurt. This covenant was made on oath, since no daughter of Isaac's family could be given in marriage to Abimelech.

Except this episode of Isaac with Abimelech, describing how the Lord renewed His alliance with Isaac and how Isaac made a covenant with Abimelech, we know hardly anything of Isaac's life. All the rest refers to his sons and explains why Esau the eldest was put aside in favour of the youngest. Nothing else in Isaac's life had any bearing on his position as heir to the promises. Moses left aside all that did not lead him to his aim, which was to show how Israel was the chosen people.

As I said before, there is no reason for attributing these three narratives to different writers. Such episodes, when they are understood in the right way, could well happen several times in a man's life, whenever he changed his dwelling-place.

CHAPTER III

EGYPT

IN this chapter I shall not go into the general question of the influence exerted over Israel by Egypt. I should like to show by a few instances that the writer of the Pentateuch was a man who knew Egypt thoroughly well, as was the case with Moses. This is often revealed by small details indicating a writer who has lived on the banks of the Nile, and who sometimes speaks from experience. This is especially remarkable in the narrative of Joseph's life. Though these events took place long before the time of Moses, the tradition concerning them had been preserved amongst the Hebrews. The Exodus and the journey through the desert, on the other hand, were events of which Moses had been an eye-witness and where he had often been the leader.

I shall merely follow the books as we find them in the Bible, dwelling on the points most striking in this respect, without attempting any systematic classification.

The "Days" of Creation

I cannot help thinking that in the first chapter of Genesis there is decidedly an Egyptian influence; not at all in the sequence of creation—there is nothing similar in the Egyptian mythology—but in the word *day*, in the division of the period of creation into six "days." Here we must remember the difficulty which the ancients had to express an abstract idea. They generally had recourse to a meta-

phor or to something perceived by the senses. Even now, though we have philosophical languages expressing the most abstruse ideas, we constantly make use of metaphors because we have not yet found the adequate expression to define with sufficient correctness that which is in our mind. When we say, for instance, " the sun rises," or in French, " le soleil se lève," we use a metaphor to which we no longer pay any attention, because it is too usual. In fact, in both languages, we speak of the sun as of a man who was lying down, and who gets up and stands, or as in German, is going up.

Supposing it is necessary to express the idea which is conveyed to us by the word " period," a certain length of time having a beginning and an end, how will primitive man, or even a man like the old Egyptian whose thought and language have not yet reached what I should call the philosophical stage, how will such a man render that idea which is so familiar to us ? For him the abstract conception of a period does not exist. He knows only the measurements of time connected with his life or with natural phenomena which take place before his eyes. The notion of a period, of a space of time independent of something which touches his body or his life, is quite strange to him. He will understand the day, beginning with sunrise and ending with sunset, the month, the interval between two births of the moon, the year consisting of so many moons ; the Egyptian will know the interval between two risings of the Nile. Therefore if he wishes to speak of a certain duration of time having a definite beginning and end, the most obvious metaphor at his disposal will be to call it a day. This word here does not apply to the astronomical duration of twelve hours opposed to the twelve hours of night ; it is only a metaphor.

This seems to me the meaning of the word day in

Egyptian. The chief document of the funerary literature has a title translated in various ways: "Three single words," says Le Page Renouf, "perfectly unambiguous when taken singly, but by no means easy of explanation." In fact Renouf's translation "coming forth by day" hardly conveys any clear idea, especially if we remember that day in Egyptian does not mean daylight, but it is a date or a measure of time. Therefore I translate: "Coming out of the day."

Several passages in the *Book of the Dead* teach us that a man's life, the period between his birth and his death, is called "his day." For instance the deceased says: "I am delivered from the quarrels of those who are in their day. I shall no more be among them." Or this: "I have come forth from the day, and I shine among the gods." The king Unas goes out of this day in the true appearance of a blessed one (Khu), or he increases his day of life. Elsewhere we find mention of a king being in his day, and the variants say: "in his time."

After death the life of an Egyptian is no more a day, no more a period with beginning and end; his existence will last with various phases and various episodes; he will take a great number of forms, but his existence in the other world will be no more limited in time, he will have gone out of the day.

A similar sense, a period with beginning and end, seems to me to have been given to the word "day" in the first chapter of Genesis, the chapter of creation.

We have first to notice that the Hebrew word translated "created" does not apply to all that is done during the six days: it applies to what might be called the preliminary work: in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. The earth is described in Hebrew by two words translated waste and void. In the LXX it is some-

what different : ἀόρατος, invisible, and ἀκατασκεύαστος, unprepared, unarranged, void in the sense that nothing that gives the earth its present appearance could be seen at its first creation.

Afterwards begin the six days, the work of which is summed up in the Fourth Commandment by the word "made." If we follow the Egyptian metaphor, each day is a definite period having a well-marked beginning called the morning, and an end called evening. We have no idea of the duration of these periods ; many things may have happened in each of them, requiring a certain length of time. But the important point to notice is that each period had a beginning and an end ; it was not of an indefinite duration. If we carry the Egyptian metaphor still further, we must notice that between the days there was night ; between the periods there was a certain length of time during which nothing happened, when the creative power was inactive. The only day in which there is no mention either of morning or evening is the seventh, when there was no creation at all. This is called "rest."

This conception of the six days of creation, six periods the length of which is unknown, beginning and ending at a definite moment, and separated by intervals, this Egyptian metaphor I humbly submit to astronomers and geologists and to the masters in natural science. It was the picture before the eyes of Moses, a picture which perhaps had already been before the eyes of his forefathers in Mesopotamia, of the way in which God had created the earth and mankind. This creation is not an insensible growth from an original atom or cell. The whole process of bringing the world to its present appearance was divided into six successive periods of a duration unknown to the author of the tablet. Evolution may perhaps be found within the space of the days, when the earth brought forth

the grass or the living creature after its kind. But for Moses, evolution is not a principle on which creation in general is based; there are six breaks in each of which something quite new appears. This sense given to the word "day" seems to me to give us the true description of the way of the creation of the world as Moses imagined that it had taken place.

Joseph

The more one reads the history of Joseph, the more clearly it appears that it must have been written by some one who knew Egypt very well, who had been a witness of its customs, and who also had intercourse with the officials at the court and with the king himself. There are few parts of Genesis which show in a more striking way the strangeness of the critical theory. The whole narrative is remarkably even. There are no unnecessary repetitions; each part follows the other quite logically, the general tone is the same. However, we are told that we are not to attribute this whole story to a single writer, but to four authors, who lived in different parts of Palestine and several centuries apart. It is impossible to reconstitute the continuous narrative of any of them. They are known only by fragments and sometimes distinguished only by bits of sentences, or even by a single word.

The writings of two of them, the Elohist and the Jahvist, must have been very similar, since they fit into each other so remarkably well, though the writers are separated by at least a hundred years, and belonged to two different kingdoms. I do not intend here to discuss the evidence upon which this extraordinary theory rests. It is chiefly philological. Therefore if, as we believe, the narrative

was written in Babylonian cuneiform, and in its present form is only a translation or an adaptation to a later language, this evidence is of very slender value. But, apart from this, it seems most extraordinary that a sentence should be cut up in this way (xl. 1): "And it came to pass after these things," are said to belong to the Elohist (*c.* 750 B.C.); "that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt," to the Jahvist (*c.* 850 B.C.); "and Pharaoh was wroth," to the Elohist again. Or again (xxxix. 20), "And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison," Jahvist; "the place where the king's prisoners were bound," a document of unknown date. Surely it is difficult to imagine a writing put together in that way, and producing a narrative the various parts of which are so well connected. I say this only in passing, since this discussion is outside the pale of this book.

Syncellus, the chronographer, says that all authors agree in stating that Joseph was raised to his high position during the reign of Apophis. This king is well known; he is mentioned in several inscriptions; he was one of the last Hyksos kings. Eusebius also says that Joseph reigned over Egypt at the time of the Hyksos. We have no reason to challenge the correctness of this statement, which seems in conformity with the narrative.

The Hyksos were Mesopotamians who at the end of their stay in Egypt had adopted the language, the customs, perhaps even part of the worship, of the Egyptians. The inscriptions of Apophis show that he had two cartouches like the native Pharaohs, and that the second was introduced by these words, "the son of Ra." The court must have become very Egyptian, and some of the higher officers were natives. For instance, it is said that Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, was an

Egyptian. The mention of this fact indicates that he did not belong to the foreign element of the ruler. Otherwise it would be needless to say that he was a native.

According to the theory of the critics, among the four different hands which they distinguish in Joseph's history, the main part of the work is due to the Elohist and the Jahvist, the Jahvist writing in the Southern kingdom about 850 B.C. and the Elohist in the Northern about 750 B.C. Taking what is called the short chronology, that of Eduard Meyer, the events must have taken place 600 years before the Elohist and 700 before the Jahvist. How could these authors know of the events of which they are speaking? What records could they have had, unless the narrative is indeed mere romance which they invented?

If it were an invention, would it not be extraordinary that their romances should be so very similar, that, put together, they make a continuous writing? For instance, except for a few sentences, the first journey to Egypt of the sons of Jacob is said to be the work of the later writer. The second journey, with the pathetic speech of Judah, belongs to the Jahvist. Yet it presupposes the first, it even alludes to it. Now when this narrative of the second visit was written, what about the first? It certainly must have been described somehow, and the description has entirely disappeared. When Judah says to Jacob (xliii. 3), "The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you," we cannot but suppose that the writer who recorded these words must have related on what occasion and how Joseph pronounced them, and so it is. We read of the arrival of Jacob's sons in Egypt, of their being recognized by Joseph, who spake roughly with them, and said: "Bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die." This is the neces-

sary introduction to the narrative of the second visit, without which this cannot be understood, and we are told that it was written a hundred years later! How strange are these two narratives: the Jahvist has no beginning, and the Elohist is a mere introduction followed by nothing! It is not possible to escape this extraordinary description, if it is contended that the narratives are inventions of the two writers.

If they are not romances, these narratives are not documents based on historical records coming from Egypt. The long period when Egypt was under the dominion of the Hyksos was always considered as a time the remembrance of which was detested by the Egyptians. The Hyksos are called in a papyrus "a pestilence," and it is obvious that the wish of the native rulers and their subjects was to wipe away completely any recollection which remained of the foreign invaders. It is not to be supposed that any record remained in Egypt of what Joseph had been, or even of his name. Why should anything have been preserved of the favourite minister to a sovereign of strange origin against whom the Egyptians felt that religious hatred which is the most vivid and the most inveterate?

Let us fancy one of the two Palestinian authors going to Egypt to get some information about Joseph, and about the time the Hebrews spent in the country. Where would he find it? Certainly not with the priests, who seem to have had no annals and records of that time; since Manetho, the Sebennyte priest who wrote the list of kings, and who for that purpose epitomized what I may call the state documents, had such very scanty information about the Hyksos dynasties. Evidently there were no historical remains of that time. Besides, if there had been any, they would have been written in hieroglyphs,

a writing certainly unknown to the inhabitants of Judea. Moreover it seems extremely doubtful whether a stranger would have been allowed access to books which were in the hands of the priests, and for the understanding of which he would have required an interpreter.

History for the mass of the people, for the public, if I may say so, was engraved on the walls of the temples. The deeds of the kings were recorded in the fine sculptures which adorned the great sanctuaries of Amon and other gods. This was the way that history was taught to the Egyptians, a teaching given chiefly by sight, by what was familiar to the eyes, since probably very few could read what was engraved on the walls. Its purpose was not to give a faithful record of what had taken place, but to extol the king, to pour on the sovereign the most lavish praise, sometimes quite fanciful and unjustified. For instance, on the walls of the temples and on the basements of statues we often find long lists of nations or cities which were said to have been conquered by the king, and to be his vassals. But we frequently know that these nations, far from being his subjects, were never even reached by the king who is said to have dominion over them. This kind of evidence is absolutely unreliable in the case of a king like Rameses II, a vain and boastful ruler, who only wished to dazzle posterity by his numerous monuments and the profuseness of the sculptures describing his achievements.

It is certainly not in inscriptions of that character that anything might be expected to be found about the Israelites, except on the stele of Menephtah, where may be read the only mention of the Israelites discovered up to the present day. There it is said that they are no more. All we know of the Israelites in Egypt as late as the time of Moses is the personal history of Joseph and the arrival of his family. Of all that happened from after Joseph's death

until the birth of Moses, Genesis is absolutely silent. We do not know anything about it.

The history of the stay of the Israelites in Egypt may be summed up under two names only: Joseph and Moses. Joseph was a very talented minister who rose to a very exalted position in very extraordinary circumstances. His activity may have been very beneficial to the country, he may have been very successful in preserving the country from famine. By his achievements he may have won the confidence of his sovereign, who perhaps rewarded him with this Egyptian title: "His eyes in the South, and his ears in the North"; but still, Joseph was a subordinate; his deeds would not be recorded on inscriptions in the temples. There everything was supposed to originate with the king, and it is very rare to find the mention of a subordinate, except in definite cases.

If the biography of Joseph had been anywhere, it would have been in his tomb, engraved or painted on its walls. There is a tomb of the time of Amenophis III of the Eighteenth Dynasty which is that of an official who had a position quite analogous to that occupied by Joseph. We see him receiving the tax-gatherers of the whole country and assessing the taxation of thirty years under the eyes of the king, who is represented as sitting on his throne. This is the biographical record of a high officer like Joseph, but Joseph certainly had no similar tomb. We know of no such monument of the Hyksos time. Joseph was not a native. Besides, he had taken "an oath from the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones." He was embalmed, as were all the people in Egypt, and "put in a coffin in Egypt," but certainly no painted and ornamented grave was cut in the rock for him; it would have been an immediate breach of the oath to put him in a "house of eternity," as the

Egyptians called a tomb. Thus reviewing the historical circumstances and the customs of the old Egyptians, we come to the conclusion that for a Palestinian writer there was no information about Joseph to be found in Egypt nor to be derived from Egyptian sources.

The history of Joseph was known by tradition; but it was not a tradition preserved abroad in a foreign country and written down many centuries afterwards when the conditions in which the Israelites lived were entirely changed. If we study the details of it, we shall recognize that the tradition bears the colour of the country where the events took place, and that it was put down in writing in the same country where the author could himself see some of the customs he describes, and at a time when he could hear some of the names of which he is speaking.

Let us take, for instance, Pharaoh's dream: "Behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came out of the river seven kine, well-favoured and fatfleshed; and they fed in the reedgrass" (xli. 2). Why does this take place near the river? And why do the cows come out of it? Because the divine cow, the goddess Hathor, goes down to the river: we see her repeatedly in the papyri coming out of the mountain, and walking among the reeds, or rather, the papyrus reeds, near the river. The beautiful cow of Hathor found at Deir-el-bahari has on both sides of her shoulders papyrus reeds which spoil the artistic effect of the monument; but they, as well as her insignia, are placed there on purpose to indicate that she is not an ordinary cow, but the goddess issuing from among the reeds on the banks of the river. Well might she be considered as the emblem of fruitfulness and abundance.

We have another example of the cow being taken not only as the emblem but as the cause of abundance. It is

in one of the chapters of the Book of the Dead, called "To give abundance to the deceased in the Lower world." We read there the following words: "I know the names of the seven cows and their bull, which give bread and drink to the deceased." And the deceased asks that this may be granted to him. The seven cows and the bull are the vignettes which generally accompany this chapter.

Pharaoh's dream is quite Egyptian in character. We can imagine, though that seems strange in some respects, the recollection of this dream being preserved in the oral tradition of the Israelites: the dream of the seven fat cows followed by the seven lean beasts eating up the fat ones. These general features may have persisted in the memory of the descendants of Jacob: but the detail that the scene takes place on the brink of the river, and that the seven kine come out of the river and feed in the reed-grass, reveals an eye-witness who had seen the cows coming out of payrus-reeds, and who knew the idea which the Egyptian associated with the cow. The second part of the dream is not connected with the river, and is not so markedly Egyptian. Nevertheless considering the first part, I cannot help thinking that this dream must have been written down in Egypt, and not in the northern kingdom of Palestine many centuries afterwards.

When the history of Jospeh was written, the tradition was very vivid among the Hebrews; they knew that they owed their arrival in Egypt and their settlement in the country to Joseph; he was the author of their present situation. His body had been preserved, embalmed in his coffin, so they certainly knew who he was and what had been the cause of his marvellous rise. His history had a special, I may say even a vital, interest for them, an interest which must have waned considerably in a distant country like Palestine, whether it be the northern or

southern kingdom, when the political conditions of the people had changed entirely. Therefore the writer who recorded it with minute details must have done so when the life of Joseph was still fresh in their memory, when the Hebrews were still living in the circumstances which were the result of Joseph's action. The writer must have been a man to whom the traditions of his people were particularly precious, who was impressed with the idea that the Israelites were the chosen people and that all the events of their history centred upon this fact.

The Egyptian names mentioned in the narrative also point to an author writing in Egypt, with a full knowledge of the Egyptians as well as the Hebrews, such as one might expect in the case of Moses.

We read that Pharaoh rewarded Joseph for his marvellous interpretation of the dream. He bestowed upon him all kinds of favours and gave him the second position in the realm. He also called his name *Zaphenath-paneah.* All kinds of interpretations of that name have been proposed. They generally start from the pedantic principle of literal transcription, of seeking in the philological rules the exact correspondence of Semitic letters with the Egyptian signs. This is quite contrary to what takes place in life, and to what we see every day. Supposing a Frenchman has to pronounce a German or an English name, he will imitate, as well as he can, what he hears. There may be in the word letters unknown to him and which he cannot pronounce. If in his transcription he finds a syllable, the sound of which is familiar to him, he will put it in, although its sense is absolutely different from the original. This is what is called popular etymology. It is obvious that in writing a name he will reproduce what he hears and he will not consult philology and its code of laws. What we see at the present day

has always been the same, especially in antiquity, where writing was far less used than it is now.

Let us fancy the king surrounded by his court. Joseph has just given his interpretation, and the king wishes to raise him to the dignity which his wisdom and his great shrewdness deserve. He does it as it is constantly done now in the East and the recollection of which remains in the French expression: *il le nomme.* He calls him by that name. His new dignity is not conferred upon him by a decree in due form registered and signed by a chancellor, and confirmed later by a diploma. No, for the ruler to address him by a new name or title is enough; it is even to-day the regular way of conferring a position; an eastern prince wishing to make a man a sheikh calls him sheikh before his officials and his court.

Common sense indicates that the name by which Joseph is called must have some reference to what he has just done. This obvious fact, rather than Semitic grammar, must lead us to the true interpretation of the name. Since Joseph has a position next to the king, he must have a name which he alone is to bear, and which must give him some prestige in the eyes of the Egyptians. It cannot be an ordinary name borne by any man. Hence the name is that of an office, of an employment. The second part of it, *paneah,* is the literal transcription of a word meaning the school of learning, the sacred college. We know from the inscriptions that to that school belonged the learned men, the magicians. From there, according to one Egyptian story, a magician was sent to exorcise a princess in Mesopotamia; according to the inscription of Canopus, the hieroglyphical writing was called the writing of the school of learning, of the sacred college. Now we see that the king "sent for all the magicians (margin, *sacred scribes*) of Egypt and all the wise men

thereof, and Pharaoh told them his dream ; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh " (xli. 8). The whole sacred college was found wanting. And " forasmuch as God had showed Joseph all this, and there was none so wise and discreet as he was," Pharaoh put him at the head of the sacred college. *Zaphenath* is only a slight alteration, due to a Semitic mouth, of the Egyptian which means *head of, master of.* Zaphenath-paneah means therefore the head of the school of learning, of the sacred college. This title is found in Egyptian inscriptions.

This seems the natural consequences of what happened. Joseph had been the only one who could interpret Pharaoh's dream. All the men who were supposed to have that particular gift, whose office it was to interpret dreams, had remained silent. Therefore the king puts Joseph, to whom God had showed this and in whom the Spirit of God was, over and above these magicians, to be the first among them and their master. Pharaoh does this in their presence and before his court by calling Joseph by this name. Such seems the only reasonable sense which we can give to the word Zaphenath-paneah.

Here the same question arises as about the cow. How could the Elohist writer living in the northern kingdom in the eighth century know this name, the altered form due to a Semite of an Egyptian word ? We might understand the sense of the word, its explanation giving the nature of the title, being preserved by tradition, though it would be somewhat extraordinary that this exact title should have survived in the memory of the Israelites during six or seven hundred years. But a foreign word which the Israelites did not understand, having absolutely no sense for them, how could such persist in their memory, since they had no occasion to use that word,

and it was never pronounced to them? If the Israelites of the eighth century had any recollection of Joseph, he was for them the hero, who from his position as slave had risen to be second to the king, who had saved his family from starvation, and who had brought them to Egypt. They would remember the leading features of his life, in reference to themselves; but as to the matters which were strictly Egyptian, his position towards the priests and the magicians, the Egyptian word naming his dignity, the remembrance of these would quickly disappear as soon as they had left Egypt, and certainly would not persist for centuries.

On the contrary, it is quite natural that Moses should know all this. He had been educated at the court of Pharaoh; he was well informed as to the hierarchy both clerical and administrative. The body of Joseph had been preserved, it was deposited somewhere, lying in its coffin. To that body was attached a tradition, perhaps even a written record by one of his countrymen, as to what his life had been. The Hebrews staying in Egypt had heard from their fathers that Joseph had been head of the sacred college. They did not translate or explain that title. They repeated it as they heard it. They understood what the Egyptian word meant, and when they met Joseph's successor in that office, they called him by that name, as did the Egyptians, merely altering it a little, so that it might be as similar as possible to their own language. In the same way now at Constantinople any stranger would call the head of the Mohammedan religion the sheikh-el-islam, though that were a strange word to him. The Arab word will not be repeated exactly alike by a Frenchman, a German, and an Englishman. Evidently the man who wrote that Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah was in Egypt, and

wrote it for people who were staying in the country.

The title "Pharaoh" in books like Genesis and Exodus interchanges with "King of Egypt"; these words are synonymous. Pharaoh is by far the more frequently employed. The first time a Pharaoh is mentioned is in the narrative of Abram's visit to Egypt; there no explanation of the word is given, the reader is supposed to know that it means the King of Egypt. If now we turn to the books written in Palestine, we find that the explanation generally follows the word (e.g., 1 Kings iii. 1): "And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter." Since the explanation is given at the beginning of the narrative of Solomon's reign, it was not necessary to repeat it in the following chapters (1 Kings xi. 18). Hadad and the Edomites came to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh. It is the same as with Solomon. Shishak is called only King of Egypt (1 Kings xxiv. 25), as well as So the King of Egypt, to whom Hoshea sent messengers (2 Kings xvii. 4), Tirhakah is called King of Ethiopia (2 Kings xix. 9). Pharaoh, King of Egypt, is said by Sennacherib to be but a bruised reed (2 Kings xviii. 21). In these instances when the name of the king was given, the title Pharaoh was absent. We find them both in the case of Pharaoh-Necoh, King of Egypt (2 Kings xxiii. 29), who destroyed Josiah's army at Megiddo, when Josiah himself was killed, and of Pharaoh-Hophra, King of Egypt (Jer. xliv. 30).

Evidently to these later writers the word Pharaoh was not so familiar as to those living in Egypt. The way that this word is used in the speeches of the butler and the baker is a feature which helps to give to these speeches a thoroughly Egyptian character. They would hardly

have such a character, if written by a writer of the northern kingdom at a great distance in time and space from the conditions under which these speeches were made.

I might also speak of the two names Potiphar and Poti-phera. Though the LXX give the same transcription of both, the spelling is different in the Hebrew. The final syllable is the name of a different god. Potiphar is an Egyptian *P hotep Har*, the gift or offering of Horus, and Poti-phera *P hotep Ra*, the gift or offering of Ra. Ra is the great god of Heliopolis (On), and it is natural that his high priest should have a name containing that of his god. *Hotep Ra*, without the article p, is met with on various occasions as the name of the high priest of On, for instance on the beautiful statue found at Medum which is supposed to belong to the Third or early Fourth Dynasty and where the high priest is seen sitting near his wife. Probably this name was assumed when the man entered upon his sacerdotal functions. *P hotep Har*, Potiphar, is formed in the same way; Horus is the second name of Ra the God of Heliopolis, who is called Harmachis-Horus on the horizon.

The LXX make no difference between the two names. They must have been the same in the Aramaic document from which they were translated; I suppose the confusion comes from the fact that at that time the traditions about Heliopolis were disappearing. Heliopolis during the Ptolemaic period seems to have been more and more neglected, and it decayed rapidly. Strabo gives the most pitiful description of that city where, instead of a learned college of priests, he found only a few ignorant custodians who showed the monument to the strangers. His description makes one think of many convents or churches in Italy or Spain. Evidently at the time of the LXX there was no longer a Hotep Ra as high

priest, and the translators gave to both officers a name in a form usual at that time, and which would be translated Heliodorus.

There are two more Egyptian touches in the history of Joseph. They have been struck out by the critics as later additions, but, on the contrary, they are proofs of the old date of the narrative. One of them is the following (xli. 46) : " And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, King of Egypt." I believe the word " stood " must not be taken here in the ordinary sense. It would be a very imperfect summary of the scene already related (see p. 79). The great event which took place when Joseph was thirty years of age was not his mere standing before the king. The word has here a sense analogous to that which is said of the tribe of Levi, " to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him " (Deut. x. 8). It would come to this : Joseph was thirty years old when he became a royal servant, minister to the king. In consequence of that, as we read in the following verse : " Joseph went out of the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt." If we had the original Babylonian word of the tablet, I presume we should find that it translated an Egyptian metaphorical expression by which an appointment or a ceremony was indicated.

I do not think that those thirty years are to be taken literally as referring to Joseph's actual age. His action consists in assessing anew the taxation and rents throughout the land in view of the time of abundance, followed by seven years of distress. These assessments, as we know from various inscriptions, were made at the end of the period called Sed, when the Sed festival was celebrated. The Sed period lasted originally thirty years. Joseph was at the end of the period of thirty years when he was entrusted by Pharaoh with these new duties.

This seems to be the Egyptian explanation of the passage. Since the Sed period had expired and had to be renewed, Joseph went out at once to lay upon the Egyptians fiscal conditions which were unusual. I suppose the thirty years of the period have been attributed to Joseph as those of his age either by Moses when he wrote the tablet, or perhaps by the translators, who put it into Aramaic or Hebrew.

Another number, which, I think, has to be interpreted in the Egyptian way and must not be taken literally, is in this passage (l. 22) : " And Joseph lived an hundred and ten years." It is repeated : " So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old." Several Egyptian inscriptions teach us that the extreme limit of old age was for them a hundred and ten years. It is the number they hope to reach. Various instances of it might be quoted. I shall mention only one : Amenophis, the son of Hapi, an official of the Eighteenth Dynasty, has left us his statue, which differs in character from the great mass of these funerary monuments. Instead of being represented as young, strong, and healthy, Amenophis is shown as an old man, with worn features and a decrepit face, and he says : " I have reached eighty years as a great favourite of the king, and I shall reach a hundred and ten years." Nobody thinks of living beyond that number ; it is the necessary end of life. I do not suppose that the Egyptians of the time of Moses knew their age much more exactly than they do at the present day. A man much advanced in years and full of days would naturally be called a man of a hundred and ten years. This is evidently what is meant in the case of Joseph ; he had reached the last limit of old age. As usual, this sentence, which has such a distinctly Egyptian character, has been struck out by the critics as a late gloss. One does not see for

what reason such a gloss should have been inserted, or where the author of it would have got that information.

I shall not dwell longer on Joseph's history. Its Egyptian character is clear from beginning to end. I hope the details which I have quoted will have shown that the author of that biography could have written only in Egypt, amongst people who knew Egypt themselves, and who had kept, together with Joseph's body, a vivid recollection of what he had done, a recollection painted with the Egyptian colouring of the life that Joseph had led. Putting aside philological arguments which, as we have said, have no value for a text which is not in its original language, one cannot understand how such a well-connected narrative, in such complete conformity with the time and country where it takes place, could be attributed to four different authors living at various epochs several centuries afterwards and in a distant land.

Details such as those which I have quoted bring out in the best way the original character of the writing. Tradition remembers the leading features, the chief facts of a life or of an epoch, but it neglects the little touches of no importance, and details which it does not understand. These minute remains, sometimes a mere sentence of three or four words, are faithful witnesses to the antiquity of the writing, and are traces of the original hand.

I have not spoken of the episode of Joseph with Potiphar's wife. It is well known that in a papyrus called *The Tale of the Two Brothers*, there is a scene which is greatly similar. Much has been said and written about the influence of one document upon the other. I cannot agree with these assumptions. *The Tale of the Two Brothers* is essentially different from Joseph's history. The men in that tale move in a very different sphere. The marvellous, one of the characteristic features of the Egyptian

tale, is so completely absent from the narrative of Genesis, and so fully present in the other story, that I cannot see any connection between them. Besides, the episode itself, by its nature, may so easily occur, especially in Oriental life, that there is no reason why two tales written in two different languages and referring to people belonging to two different nations, could not both contain a very similar occurrence without supposing a common origin.

Genesis ends with the death of Joseph, and, if we look back through the whole book, we shall find Ariadne's thread running through the whole of it. The separate tablets of which it consists are not joined together like the chapters of a continuous roll; nevertheless, they are connected by one thought, and one purpose, the fixed intention of showing how Israel was set apart as the people of God. The book is not the book of the annals of Israel, it is not the complete and continuous narrative of what happened to the people from the beginning, it is the series of documents, if I may so express it, of title-deeds, establishing Israel's special character and the mission which Israel had to fulfil. Moses is so possessed with this idea, he has such a deep sense of his duty as a recorder of the events and circumstances through which God led His people, that he neglects everything which has no direct bearing on the history of his nation. For instance, he does not mention the names of the kings of Egypt of whom he is speaking, of the Hyksos ruler who put Joseph at the head of his land, or of the persecutor, or even of the sovereign before whom he had himself to appear and from whom he had to wrest leave for the departure of the Israelites.

The history of Egypt, as such, does not concern him. Whatever changes have taken place in the land itself,

the wars which resulted in the expulsion of the foreigners and the re-establishment of the native rulers; later, the rise in the power of Egypt, the military expeditions north and south, the conquests of the great kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty, especially the conquest of Palestine, all these events, which mark the highest point ever reached by Egyptian power and Egyptian civilization, leave Moses absolutely indifferent. He merely describes the Israelites as prosperous at the end of Joseph's life under the protection of the king of the land. He will not say anything of their stay in Egypt as long as the king does not interfere with their life as shepherds and leaves them alone. He does not even mention that in Egypt they were safe and quiet, while Canaan, the residence of their father Jacob, was the battlefield of Thothmes III and of a confederacy of inhabitants struggling against the foreign invaders. Great battles were fought, the whole land had to submit, governors were put at the head of all the cities. What would have become of the Israelites had they been in Palestine during that time, especially if they had become rich like Abraham and Isaac? They would perhaps have had a fate like Lot when the kings of Shinar and others conquered the country where he was living, and they would have had no Abraham to deliver them. The achievements of the Egyptian kings are entirely alien to the purpose of Moses, who records on his tablets only the events about which he had a definite national tradition, or of which he was an eyewitness.

CHAPTER IV

THE JOURNEY TO CANAAN

The Exodus

WITH the Book of Exodus the events begin of which Moses was a witness. This history and legislation was recorded by him on tablets. But, since he now speaks of events of his time, events which concerned himself or his countrymen, the form of his tablets is somewhat different. It is not now necessary to put an introduction, explaining what the circumstances are in which the events he is going to describe take place, or in which the laws are executed. One tablet only requires this, the first with which the Book of Exodus begins. It is necessary to state in a few words who the Israelites are, his countrymen about whom he is going to relate such wonderful events. They are all descendants of Jacob, his eleven sons and their families amounting to seventy souls, who came into Egypt where Joseph, the twelfth, was already. They have "increased abundantly and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty." No further information is required, nor any reference to previous writings.

The narrative begins at once: "Now there arose a king over Egypt which knew not Joseph." These few words sum up events of the greatest importance which had changed entirely the face of Egypt. Under the reign of the last king, Apepi, perhaps the successor of Joseph's king, war had broken out with the princes of Thebes. One

of them, *Seqenenra*, had been killed in battle, as his mummy shows; nevertheless, the native rulers had succeeded in driving out the foreign dynasty. King Aahmes, the liberator, had even captured the fortress of Avaris, which they had built in the Delta. His successors were powerful, and under their rule Egypt became a great empire; her armies went as far as Mesopotamia.

During the reign of this mighty Theban dynasty everything connected with the foreign kings was eradicated. Their dominion is described as a time of desolation and ruin. A queen of the Eighteenth Dynasty says in poetical language: "I have restored that which was ruins, I have raised that which was unfinished since the Asiatics were in the midst of Avaris of the Northland, and the strangers were in the midst of the land, overthrowing that which was made while they ruled in ignorance of Ra." Evidently no recollection of Joseph had been preserved except among the Hebrews. It would have been hateful to the Egyptians as belonging to a time, the remembrance of which was odious to them.

We see a trace of that feeling in the words, "which knew not Joseph." In Egyptian, "ignore" (khem) has often a hostile sense, for instance, in the inscription just quoted. This sense must have been expressed by the Babylonian word of the tablet. We have here an exact translation of an Egyptian word which is again a Mosaic touch, a detail not to be expected from a late author writing in another country.

The same feeling comes out even more strongly in Ex. i. 12: "They were grieved because of the children of Israel," where the margin reads, "abhorred." The result of the hostility of the new dynasty was the persecution inflicted on the Hebrews, as described in the words: "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve

with rigour, and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all matter of service in the field, all their service wherein they made them serve with rigour . . . therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses." Other passages describe how hard this service was. It is said that "they sighed by reason of the bondage, and God heard their groaning" (ii. 23). "And the Lord said: I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows" (iii. 7).

Evidently the persecution consisted in a complete change in their way of living. The Israelites, when they came to Egypt, were shepherds, nomads, possessors of flocks of cattle; as Joseph said to Pharaoh: "The men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of cattle, and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all they have." They ask to be allowed to live in the land of Goshen, which was particularly suitable for their way of living. And Pharaoh says also to Joseph: "If thou knowest any able men among them, then make them rulers over my cattle." The Hebrews had been shepherds for generations, and suddenly were compelled to change entirely their way of life. Instead of the easy-going life of cattle-drivers, they were to become brick-layers, builders, navvies, condemned to a labour unknown to them, and which clashed with all their traditions and their abilities.

In a painting of the time of Thothmes III, we see what the Israelites had to do. A number of men of a Semitic type, who are called captives, and who probably come from the cities of Palestine which had been conquered by the king, are making bricks. Some of them fetch water

to wet the clay, others mould the bricks, others carry them towards the place where a building is to be raised. The overseer, or, as Scripture calls him, the taskmaster, is there with his stick in his hand, ready to interfere if he sees that the activity of the men is relaxing.

One can understand that kind of life being very distasteful to shepherds. It would be so at the present day to Bedouin nomads. They merely look after their sheep and goats, they do not know what real work is, there is no activity for them except robbery, and, for some warlike tribes, fighting. A shepherd would resent having a taskmaster who is absolutely necessary to workmen, even at present. The overseer with a stick in his hand, in the picture of Thothmes III, is what we call now a *reis*; he has to see that the men are working, and do not sit down and remain idle, as is often done when there is no *reis*. It was nothing exceptional for the Israelites that they had taskmasters. It was the custom of the country; work was, and is now done in that way. But that the taskmasters were particularly hard and exacting towards them and embittered still more their new life, which was a heavy burden for them, seems certain. The Israelites were treated as prisoners of war. We know from the Assyrian and Egyptian sculptures what terrible sufferings were inflicted upon enemies who had been taken alive. There was no pity for them. The Israelites had not made war. They were regarded as enemies transported from abroad, from a conquered country; they were used as workmen, or rather, as slaves. We can easily imagine what slavery was at that time, under such circumstances.

As for the order given to the midwives to kill the boys, we would compare with it customs found now among savage nations, where certain children have to be killed, for instance, twins among several African tribes.

What seems extraordinary is that there should be only two midwives for such an enormous population as the Jews were at that time. We shall see further on how that may be explained. But I believe no value must be attributed to the numbers given in the Hebrew text. Various explanations have been given of these numbers, among which I have to mention particularly that of Prof. Flinders Petrie.[1] I must say that all these explanations, even that which I propose myself, seem to be of doubtful value. We must remember that our text is not original; it is a transcription, if not a translation, and when numbers are represented by letters, it is easy to make an error of transliteration which entirely changes the numbers. We shall have to revert to this point later.

Certainly the time of the persecution in Egypt was for the Israelites a period of great suffering, but we must consider this also from the other side, from the Egyptian point of view. The king who knew not Joseph says to his people (Exod. i. 9): "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us (margin). Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass that when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us and get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them. . . ." This is the reason given by the Pharaoh for dealing so harshly with the Israelites, and all we can say about his view is that it is quite sensible and true.

Let us picture to ourselves the state of the country at the time when the king spoke these words. I still adhere to the view advocated first by Lepsius, and still held by most Egyptologists, that the persecutor of the Jews was

[1] Petrie's *Israel and Egypt*, p. 41 and ff.

Rameses II, whose very long reign was the beginning of decay for the Egyptian empire, and that the king of the Exodus was his son Menephtah. We see in Scripture that the king before whom Moses had to appear, against whom he had to carry out a long struggle which ended in Israel's deliverance, was not the same as the one who had compelled the Hebrews to build the store-cities. When Moses had been obliged to fly from Egypt and to take refuge with Jethro, "it came to pass in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up to God by reason of their bondage." Evidently the fact of the change of king had given the Israelites some hope that there might be at least a slight relaxation in the oppression with which they were afflicted.

The reign of Rameses II, the oppressor, is one of the longest in Egyptian history. He was a vain and boastful character, who wished to dazzle posterity by covering the land with constructions whereon his name was engraved thousands of times, and who plumed himself in his inscriptions upon great conquests which he never made.

The political condition of the country was very different from what it had been under his predecessors of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The great kings, such as Thothmes III and Amenophis III, had nothing to fear from the Hebrews. Probably they were not yet so numerous as they were later ; besides, Egypt was not then threatened by her immediate neighbours. Palestine had been conquered, her cities as far as Zidon were tributary to Pharaoh. He was the sovereign to whom the governors had to report. In order to ensure the subjection of the native rulers, the king had their sons brought to Egypt, and they were sent from Egypt to take their father's place when he died. Rebellion might arise among them, but they would never

be strong enough to march to the frontiers of Egypt and endanger the safety of the realm.

At the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Amenophis IV made a religious revolution. When I say religious, it must not be considered as a change in the belief, or what may be called the faith of the people. It was an attack against the power of the college of priests at Thebes, and an act of hostility against Amon, the god whom they were worshipping. In order to break the power of his priests, it was necessary to destroy their god and to try to eradicate his worship from Egypt. The Tel-el-Amarna letters have shown us that, in spite of these troubles, under Amenophis IV the power of Egypt was unbroken in Palestine, and that the Mesopotamian kings wished as strongly as before to make alliance with the Pharaoh.

It is probable that the reaction which followed his reign was accompanied by inner convulsions, during which Palestine regained its independence, and that the dominion of Egypt over her Eastern neighbour disappeared. There must also have been migrations of those nations towards the south, for we see that the father of Rameses II, Seti I, had to fight the Shasu, the inhabitants of Sinai and of the South of Canaan. The inscription speaking of this sovereign says that the king goes out to defeat the Shasu, "beginning at the fortress of Zar, as far as Canaan." The fortress of Zar, the present Kantarah, was on the extreme limit of Egypt, on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile. This shows that the enemies were as close as possible to the kingdom, since they were separated from it only by a branch of the river. Seti, in spite of his successes, did not go farther than the coast of the Philistines, and the Kadesh which he is said to have taken was that in the South of Palestine.

The expeditions of Rameses II against the Khetas (the Hittites) were certainly successful. Following the coast of the Mediterranean, he went as far as the Nahr-el-Kelb, but his wars seem to have had more the character of raids ; his conquests were ephemeral, they did not lead to a permanent possession of the coasts, as did those of Thothmes III. In his treaty of peace with the Khetas, the two enemies treat on equal terms ; it is even likely that the conditions of peace were drawn up by the Khetas. All this shows that there were enemies of the Egyptians in the immediate neighbourhood sufficiently strong to be able to invade some day the Valley of the Nile. The danger which Pharaoh took as a pretext for keeping down the Israelites was not at all imaginary, especially since, the enemies being Semites like the inhabitants of Sinai, the Israelites would have been tempted to side with invaders who were of the same race as themselves, and also as the memory of the rulers who had welcomed the ancestors of the Israelites, Joseph and Jacob, and had settled them in the good land where they had prospered, was detested by the Egyptians.

"And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses." This also seems good policy on the part of the king. The land of Goshen, which extended as far as the Red Sea, the present Wâdy Tumilât, was the key of the country. There ended several desert roads, by which trade, caravans, travellers, and also military expeditions might enter the country. The Wâdy Tumilât led them to the very heart of the kingdom. The first city reached was Bubastis, from which two or three days' march brought them to Heliopolis and Memphis. These large towns were at the head of the Delta, and the enemy who occupied them cut the country in two.

In order to protect his kingdom against possible inva-

sions on that side, Rameses compelled the Israelites to build two cities which were at the same time fortresses : Pithom and Raamses. Pithom, the city of the god Tum, was at a short distance from the present Ismailiah, at a site called Tel-el-Maskhuta, " the mount of the statue." This place can be identified from the numerous inscriptions found in the excavations on the spot, ranging from the time of Rameses II to the Roman Empire. Latin inscriptions proved the correctness of the guess of the French geographer, d'Anville, that the Greek name of the city was Heroopolis, or Ero, which we know from Strabo to have been at the head of the Heroopolitan gulf. It shows that the Red Sea, even in Roman time, extended much further north, and included what are now called the Bitter Lakes and Lake Timsah, through which the Suez Canal is running. The identity of Pithom and Heroopolis was proved also by a passage in Genesis (xlvi. 28). It is said that Jacob " sent Judah before him unto Joseph to shew the way before him unto Goshen, and Joseph made ready his chariot and went to meet Israel his father to Goshen." Here the LXX are more precise. They read : " He sent Judah before him to Joseph, to meet him at Heroopolis unto the land of Rameses, and Joseph having made ready his chariot, went to meet his father at Heroopolis." Heroopolis is a Greek name, therefore the Coptic version reads in the first sentence : to meet him " at Pithom, the city in the land of Rameses," and in the second, " at Pithom the city."

The site of Pithom was the first discovered. I had then suggested that Raamses might be the mound called Tel Rotâb, a few miles west of Pithom. My excavations had not then given results of any importance. What Prof. Flinders Petrie has found in this mound shows conclusively that it was the City of Raamses. We know now the site

of the two cities built by the Israelites : they guarded the southern road from Palestine, and were a very effective protection for Egypt. Therefore we cannot wonder that Pharaoh employed the numerous population settled in the valley to raise this useful defence. At the same time, it is natural that the Hebrews should resent strongly a treatment which no doubt was applied to them with the usual harshness of Eastern nations, and which was particularly oppressive since its purpose was to prevent them from increasing in number so as to become a danger for the State.

The details of the narrative certainly reveal an eye-witness of the events described. For instance, the fear of Pharaoh is expressed in this way : " lest they multiply, and it come to pass that when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us." This shows that there was imminent danger of the kingdom being invaded from abroad. In fact, in the beginning of the reign of Menephtah, the king of the Exodus, we see that a great invasion of African and Mediterranean nations entered the Delta and reached the neighbourhood of Memphis. That there had been danger also from the side of Palestine is proved by the great laudatory tablet of Menephtah discovered by Prof. Flinders Petrie, in which we find the only mention of the Israelites in an Egyptian text. It says that there is nothing to fear from the Canaanite cities, because they are " prisoners of all kinds of evils," meaning that they are entangled in internecine war. Israel does not exist any more, and Kheta is at peace. Thus Israel is quoted among the nations which the king had had to dread, and this justifies what is said of Pharaoh. Would, as the critics maintain, an inhabitant of Judea, writing many centuries afterwards, be so well informed about the

state of the country, and relate such details harmonizing so well with the circumstances in which the Hebrews and their oppressors stood when the events occurred which preceded the Exodus ?

How could this writer know the motives which induced Pharaoh to persecute the Israelites ? These motives are given as words spoken by the king, and this is in accordance with the minds of these ancient peoples. A thought does not exist for them independently of its outward expression in speech ; it must be spoken, In many cases, when translating these old texts into modern language, we should say, " he thought," instead of, " he said." The word " say " often expresses only an activity of the mind, a thought, a wish, or another mental action. No doubt the writer of later times knew of the captivity and persecution. This tradition has lasted through the whole history of the Jews, down to the present day. But since the persecution arose from a political cause due to the circumstances of the time, it is difficult to imagine how a late writer could have known it, while for Moses, who lived in the midst of those circumstances, it was perfectly clear, and he described exactly what he saw or heard.

Another detail, thoroughly Egyptian, which reveals an author who wrote in Egypt, is found in Exodus i. 15 : " And the King of Egypt spoke to the Hebrews' midwives, of which the name was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah, and he said : When ye do the office of midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birth-stool. . . ." This is exactly what we see in two famous sculptures, one of the birth of the Queen Hatshepsu, and another of the birth of King Amenophis III. In both cases the mother is sitting upon a stool and there are two goddesses acting as midwives near her. In the case of Mutemua, the mother of Amenophis III, each of the god-

desses holds one of the hands of the mother. It is not likely that all the Hebrew women had two midwives, like the Egyptian princesses. But here Pharaoh speaks about what he knows and is accustomed to, and it is impossible not to be struck by the thoroughly Egyptian character of the narrative, which cannot be due to a Palestinian writer, whatever be his date.

It is not so easy to discriminate the various tablets of which this narrative consists, as it was in Genesis. However, there is one easily discernible; it goes from chapter vi. 2 to vii. 7. It is the renewal of the Covenant of the Lord with the Israelites and with the gathering of the elders to whom Moses was sent. That is the reason why the heads of their fathers' houses are here enumerated, and, since at first they had not listened to Moses and Aaron, a charge is given them "unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt." The tablet ends with saying that when Moses started for his mission he was fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three.

I shall not dwell on the ten plagues, which, in a weaker degree, can many of them be found in Egypt at the present day. I must say only from experience that the fourth plague, translated "lice," seems to correspond better, as the margin says, to the sandflies, certainly, as travellers know, one of the most tormenting insects in Egypt.

Now we come to the Exodus proper, the marching of the people out of Egypt. It is said that the Israelites numbered about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides children (xii. 37). As I said before, we cannot in the least trust the numbers given in the narrative. This census is difficult to understand. Why should the men and the children only be mentioned, and

the women entirely omitted? If it were so, that would suppose a population of at least two million people, perhaps even more. It would be a great part of the population of the whole country. Two million people could not inhabit the Wâdy Tumilât; they could not be gathered together at one spot, their camp would have covered a wide area, and they would have required an enormous quantity of food and water.

I do not feel competent to enter upon a discussion with the Hebrew scholars upon this passage. I only suggest a translation tentatively, the more so since there may have been an error in the transcription from the cuneiform or the Aramaic text. In this expression, "six hundred thousand on foot that were men," could the words, "on foot that were men," mean the strong ones, those who could stand on their feet and walk and did not require any help? Only infants who could not walk and had to be carried, the *parvuli* of the Vulgate, would then be excluded. There would not be a great number of them. This would make, all told, only a few thousand above the six hundred thousand. That would certainly be a large and powerful tribe, nevertheless, it would be far more manageable than a population of several millions, and there would be no impossibility of applying to it what is related in the narrative. This is an explanation based on the Hebrew text as we have it; but as this is not the original, it is quite possible that the transcription may be incorrect.

The excavations at Pithom have thrown a great deal of light over the direction of the route of the Exodus, and upon its stations. The identification of the site of Heroopolis which, according to Strabo, Pliny and the geographer Ptolemy, was situated at the head of the Arabian Gulf, has shown that the sea was very near to the country inhabited by the Israelites, and that it was not necessary to make

long marches to reach it. Geologists like Du Bois Aymé, Linant Bey, Prof. Hull, and Sir William Dawson had clearly proved from natural science that the Red Sea extended in former times further north than it does now, but here we have a proof from Roman inscriptions that it was so in Roman times.

"The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth." Here we must take Rameses as meaning the land of Rameses. In Genesis it seems synonymous with Goshen, the centre of which must have been east of Bubastis. From there they marched to Succoth. This name, meaning "tents," is what we call a popular etymology, a transcription from the sound, in which the original form of the name is sufficiently altered to have a sense in the language of the foreign people who have to pronounce it; but this sense has nothing do to with the primitive meaning of the word. This is the way in which transcriptions are made at the present day; they are not according to the rules of philology. Succoth is the Hebrew form of Thuket, or Thukot, the region where Pithom was built. The name Thukot has in Egyptian a sign indicating that it has a foreign origin; it is not Egyptian. I believe it is African: it appears in several Hamitic languages of North Africa, where it means a pasture. The region round Pithom was certainly a pasture land, for we find in a papyrus that Eastern nomads ask to be allowed to enter the country, so that they might graze their cattle in the pastures of Pithom in Succoth.

In that part of the journey of the Israelites, water was abundant, since they followed the fresh-water canal going from Bubastis to the Red Sea. Leaving Succoth, they skirted the Arabian Gulf and reached the desert of Etham. From there, they could go straight across the desert, towards the southern part of Palestine, towards Beer-

sheba. It was the road which Jacob had taken when he came with his family to settle in Egypt. Caravans followed it as late as the nineteenth century. The way "of the land of the Philistines" along the coast of the Mediterranean would have been nearer, but the Israelites would have had to pass fortresses like Zar, which certainly would have been great obstacles and would have occasioned fighting.

Arriving at the edge of the wilderness of Etham, the Israelites could consider themselves well out of Egypt: they had only to look forward to the happy day when, having crossed the desert, they would reach the land of the promise. But they would be in great danger, in case the King of Egypt wished to pursue them. His chariots would soon have overtaken this multitude, which could not march very fast, and his host would have made a slaughter of these fugitives, who had no way of escape. This seems to be the reason why they received a command which they must have considered as very extraordinary and of a nature to shake their confidence in their leader. They were not to change the direction of their march, to incline it more north or more south: they were actually ordered to retrace their steps (Exodus xiv. 1): "And the Lord spoke with Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon: over against it shall ye encamp by the sea. And Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in."

This order, at first sight, is certainly most startling. Instead of marching straight on, on a road which was quite open, they are told to turn back and to march south towards a definite spot, where they will have the sea in front of them, an insuperable obstacle between their camp and the desert. It looked as if they were told to

walk into a trap. That is the way in which Pharaoh interprets their march. The Israelites are entangled in the country, they wander in it at random, they cannot leave it because the wilderness hath shut them in. They went as far as its edge, but then, he thought, they were afraid of its dangers, and dared not face the hardships and difficulties for such a large tribe of a journey through the desert. "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" Pharaoh made ready his horses and chariots to pursue them, and they came upon them at the spot where the Israelites had been ordered to camp.

Although the narrative of Scripture is very concise, and there are no unnecessary details, it tallies so well with the circumstances, especially with the local conditions, that it is impossible not to attribute it to an eyewitness. Supposing with the critics, that this chapter is a compound of two documents, the Jahvist and the Priestly Code, written by two authors living at four hundred years' interval, since according to this theory the idea that they copied an old document is excluded, they must have both followed an oral tradition.

It is well known that tradition recollects the main lines of an event: in this case, the fact that the Israelites had been pursued by the Egyptians and that they had been saved by the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. But it is most improbable, not to say impossible, that tradition should have remembered the details of the first three marches, the sudden change, when the Israelites reached the limit of the desert in the direction followed, and this zigzagging in the land, suggesting to Pharaoh the idea of pursuing them in order to bring them back to Egypt. Surely these are not the features of a tradition which had lasted five or nine hundred years. They are characteristic

of the written testimony of a man who has been a witness of these events, and who has taken part in them.

This fact is still more striking when we consider what is said of the place where the Israelites are to camp. The two verses describing that place are attributed to the Priestly Code, the la er of the two documents which are said to be mingled in the chapter. The Priestly Code is said to have been written by Ezra, according to some of the critics, or by an anonymous author of the fifth century according to others. Both authors are said to have come from Mesopotamia, where Aramaic was the book language, and at a time when Persian influence was strongly felt in Palestine. Could a Jew like Ezra, not living in Egypt, a scribe in the service of the Persian king, have known about nine centuries afterwards the exact spot where the passage of the Red Sea had taken place?

It is indicated here in the most precise way: the landmarks of it are given. It cannot be a vast region, since it is a camp. This contrasts entirely with the geographical data given later. They are so vague as regards the journey in the desert, that the way the Israelites followed is very uncertain and has given rise to most divergent theories as to their stations and marches during the forty years in the wilderness. Here, on the contrary, the order is given with a marvellous precision: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn back, and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon: over against it shall ye encamp by the sea." A staff officer would hardly speak differently, and it is obvious that an order of this kind has been written down, either by the man who gave it, or the one who received it. Here it cannot have been written by any other than Moses, who had to execute it. It is not a tradition which would have lasted as such through centuries.

Pi-hahiroth is the Egyptian name of *Pi-kerehet*, or *Pi-keheret* as it was pronounced by the Hebrews. By the great inscription known as the stele of Pithom, we are informed that it was a sanctuary of Osiris at a short distance from Pithom: it was the Serapeum mentioned by the Itinerary of Antonine as being eighteen miles distant from Ero, Heroopolis. I believe this Serapeum, Pi-hahiroth, to be the large Roman settlement which is at the foot of the Djebel Mariam, south of Lake Timsah. That is the northern landmark.

The southern one is Migdol, a name meaning in Hebrew a tower. It is transcribed in the hieroglyphic texts. We have information about this Migdol in several papyri of the British Museum. In one of them a scribe who is going after two fugitives relates that first he arrived at the enclosure of Succoth, evidently a wall protecting the region against the invasions of the nomads. There he was informed that the fugitives had crossed the water north of Migdol of King Seti I. Another papyrus speaks of a stronghold in the southern part of Succoth. Migdol was a watch-tower which, from the aspect of the country, I should place on the height called by the French the Serapeum, and where, until thirty years ago, there was a trilingual tablet, Egyptian and cuneiform, dedicated by Darius. The watch-tower was necessary since, as we shall see, owing to a phenomenon which took place occasionally, the nomads found the sea open and could easily wade through in order to pillage the royal domains on the other side. The pasture land near Pithom was royal property, as we know also from a papyrus where it is called the great estate, or the farm with live stock. Therefore the LXX instead of "before Pi-hahiroth," read "before the farm."

"Over against Baal-zephon." Most commentators

agree that this was not a city, nor even a village, but a place of worship of a Semitic divinity, in the form and with the name of Baal. It was, as the Targum explains it, the sanctuary of an idol, the form of which is not known. It may have been a mere stone. The name, Baal-zapuna in its Egyptain garb, is mentioned in a papyrus which also shows that it was outside Egypt, on the other side of the sea. We may consider that it was a holy place, like the tombs of sheikhs, which are generally built on hills, and where people congregate on certain days. Even now there is a place of that kind in that region. Going out of Lake Timsah, there is a hill called Tussum, where a sheikh called Ennedek was buried. Every year, about the 14th of July, the place is visited by a great concourse of people to celebrate a religious festival. There is, very likely, an old tradition connected with the place, which may not be exactly the spot where the sheikh was buried. It has persisted through thousands of years. It is well known how places of worship keep their sacred character through ages, in spite of changes of religion. It may be that the sheikh was buried there because the place was held sacred, though Mohammed had dethroned Baal.

We have now the landmarks of the camping ground of the Israelites. On the north Pi-hahiroth, Pikerehet, not far from Pithom, at the foot of the present Djebel Mariam; on the south-east Migdol, the mound near the present station of the canal now called the Serapeum; in front of them the sea, and opposite, on the Asiatic side, a hill where was the sanctuary of Baal-zephon.

It may be asked why this spot was chosen and pointed out to Moses with such accuracy. The reason seems to be that at that spot a phenomenon occurred which was the means of escape of the Israelites. The sea receded under the influence of the wind. "And Moses stretched out his

hand over the sea, and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (Ex. xiv. 21). It has often been noticed by travellers in Egypt that when a strong wind blows from a certain direction, the sea recedes, sometimes for a great distance, and comes back again to its former bed when the wind ceases or changes its direction. This phenomenon is not rare in Lake Menzaleh, which communicates with the sea, in Lake Bourlos, and in other parts of Egypt. There is nothing extraordinary in its taking place in the part of the sea between the Timsah and the Bitter Lakes; moreover the slow rising of the ground, which in later times cut off Lake Timsah from the Bitter Lakes, was already being felt; the sea must have been very shallow and probably not very wide. One may even suppose that it had been known before that this phenomenon occurred at that particular spot, and it may have been this reason which compelled the Egyptians to build there a stronghold, a tower to watch the temporary opening.

The description given of the phenomenon, especially when it is said that the water was a wall unto them, indicates that there was a stream, a current which could only be produced by the tide. For the effect of the water rising like a wall is a characteristic of this natural accident when it occurs in a river. There are well authenticated reports of the opening of the Rhone at Geneva under the influence of a very strong wind. It is distinctly said that the people could walk from one bank to the other, and that the water looked like a wall. In the case of the Hebrews, the way under their feet must have been sandy

ground, and while they could easily wade through, it was very bad soil for the chariots, the wheels sank into the sand, "so that they drave them heavily." Not only could they not overtake the Israelites, but they gave up the pursuit, and, the wind ceasing, suddenly "the sea returned to its strength, and the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea."

We see now the reason why the Israelites had to change their itinerary. Had they remained on the northern route, which they had chosen at first, and which was quite open, they would have had nothing to shelter them from the pursuit of the Egyptians. After having crossed the Red Sea they were safe. Even if Pharaoh had not suffered this disaster, the loss of his vanguard of chariots, the sea now separated the Israelites from the Egyptians.

There again the trace of the eyewitness appears everywhere. He had seen the events he relates. He had lifted up his eyes, "and behold, the Egyptians were marching." He had heard the Israelites reproaching bitterly their leaders: "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness; wherefore hast thou thus dealt with us?" These are not inventions of an author writing several centuries afterwards. In his terse language Moses describes the anguish and the dismay of the people who nearly rebelled against him; and what allowed him to stand perfectly calm in this storm of anger and terror was his absolute confidence in his Lord. "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord . . . The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." This confidence is rewarded by the answer: "Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Judging this narrative from the purely literary side, it bears the char-

acter of a scene which has been lived through ; and this is quite in keeping with the remarkable accuracy of the geographical data whereby is revealed an author who knew perfectly the place of which he was speaking.

This route has been suggested before upon other grounds by Linant Bey, a French engineer, who based it chiefly on geology, and by the Norwegian Egyptologist, Lieblein. It differs only slightly from that suggested by another geologist, Sir William Dawson, who placed the passage ten miles further south. The new proof of its correctness rests entirely on information derived from the excavations at Pithom and on the important inscriptions discovered in the old city. They established that the Red Sea extended much further north even in Roman time, a fact which has been recognized by geologists, but attributed to prehistoric times. This fact is the key of the whole question. Now only can we see that the description of the Exodus is in complete conformity with the geographical conditions of the country, and that there is no impossibility of any kind in the description of the journey.

From Rameses to Succoth is not a long march, and doubtless the joy of being free gave the Israelites additional strength, as would also the wish to be as soon as possible out of the reach of their oppressors. One may suppose that this first march had the character of a forced march: they went as far as possible in the pasture region of Succoth. From there to the edge of the desert of Etham, which must have been near the site of the city of Ismailiah, they did not march more than six or seven miles, and when they turned back and had to skirt the present Lake Timsah, it was not a long day's journey. There was no extraordinary difficulty in their movements as they are described in Exodus.

It is certainly different with the old explanation—that

they passed the Red Sea in the vicinity of the present city of Suez. This route supposed long marches quite out of question for a large tribe of people going on foot, such indeed as would be achieved with difficulty by a caravan of camels. Besides, they would have found on their track a serious obstacle: they would have had to pass over the ridge of Djebel Geneffeh, a considerable height difficult of access. In travelling by rail from Ismailiah to Suez, before reaching the Bitter Lakes, the way seems entirely closed by the Djebel Geneffeh and its highest summit. Josephus twice alludes to the fact that the Israelites had before them steep mountains projecting into the sea, and that they were shut up between the sea and the mountains. Their way seemed entirely barred, and this explains their despair, as described in Scripture and by Josephus.

Lastly, upon the assumption that they passed as far south as Suez, the command they received is absolutely inexplicable and senseless. They are marching through the desert as fast as they can; how can they be told to turn back, and to where? What result would it have had for them? Instead of bringing them near the spot where they are to cross the sea, turning back would only divert them from that spot and expose them as a prey to Pharaoh's pursuit. If the geographical conditions of the country were those which this explanation implies, one can very well understand how the impossibilities contained on this hypothesis in the narrative, the complete discrepancy with the local circumstances, have led the critics to consider it as a late composition due to a man who had an approximate idea of the great lines of the tradition, but who was absolutely ignorant of what the country was, and who had never been there.

Certainly the narrative of the Exodus, and the passage

of the Red Sea, are episodes which bear in the strongest way the Mosaic character, the mark of the eyewitness. This comes out particularly in the greographical indications. The place itself, even in its present appearance, is remarkably well fitted for what took place there several thousand years ago. I have no doubt that whoever looks at it from the hill of the Serapeum, the site where, in my opinion, stood the watch-tower of Migdol, having the Djebel Geneffeh at his back, will easily picture to himself in the plain at his feet the multitude of the Israelites seeing in the distance the dust of the chariots of the pursuers, and, half mad with terror, looking anxiously at the sea, which, far from being a barrier, was to be their way of escape.

An argument against the historical value of the narrative has been drawn from the fact that not only does the tomb of Menephtah exist at Thebes, but that his body has been found mummified. This argument can only be adduced from a very inattentive reading of the events. Nowhere is it said that the king himself died in the sea. Only his chariots and horsemen are spoken of—evidently a quick vanguard sent to run after the Israelites, as would be done now by a regiment of cavalry. This vanguard was probably under the command of one of the princes; the head of the chariots was generally the king's son. We have several examples of this, especially in the reign of Rameses.

The song is probably not exactly what was sung by the Israelites after their deliverance. I suppose that the canticle they struck up immediately, when they saw the destruction of Pharaoh's army and that they were safe on the land, consisted of the first two verses, the burden by which Miriam accompanied the dances of the women and marked the rhythm, using at the same time a timbrel. This would be exactly what is done still in Egypt, when

instead of by musical instruments a dance is accompanied by a song, always the same and repeated over and over again. Here, what inspired the dance of the triumphant daughters of Israel would be the words:

> Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously:
> The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

As for the rest of the hymn, I do not see why it could not be Mosaic. I should consider it as a hymn of deliverance composed by Moses in remembrance of this great event, to keep alive among the future generations the recollection of the marvellous escape of the people from the hands of the Egyptian king. I cannot help thinking that it dated from the end of Moses' life, when the Israelites were on the border of the land of promise, and when they had in front of them Moab, Edom, and the population of Canaan. It seems to have a Deuteronomic character. It reminds one of the last chapters of that book. Especially it supposes, as Deuteronomy does, that the first thing the Israelites will do will be to choose a place for the Lord's abode (xv. 13): "Thou hast guided them in Thy strength to Thy holy habitation . . . Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance. The place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established." Here also Moses cannot suppose that there will be no abode for the Lord, that the ark will still be under a tent, wandering from place to place. He imagines the people singing that hymn of thanksgiving at the sanctuary which the Lord's hands have established. It is a psalm which he leaves to them for the future. It is quite possible that the writer who collected the tablets of Moses, whom we suppose to be Ezra, may have inserted

this hymn at that place, though it originally was independent.

Moses was a poet, and we have other specimens of his poetical works: the long song given by Deuteronomy (ch. xxxii.), of which it is said: "and Moses came and spake the words of this song in the ears of the people, he and Hoshea, the son of Nun"; and the blessing which he gave to the people before he went to the top of Pisgah. The authorship of these hymns has been denied to him, chiefly on linguistic or philological grounds. But if, as we hold, these hymns are not in the original language in which Moses wrote, those linguistic arguments are of little value, and the contents of the hymns and their nature alone has to be considered. We see nothing in them which would prevent us from attributing them to Moses.

There is another piece of poetry, a psalm, also a translation, called "a prayer of Moses the man of God": this name is found also in the LXX. This title has been rejected, like many others in the Psalms. But here we have an opportunity for challenging the method of a good many critics. This psalm is attributed to Moses. It is not very difficult, any more than in the case of a considerable number of writings, to argue that it is not the work of the assigned author. This is a kind of philological game which is practised largely in certain universities. Even supposing it has been shown not to be by the assigned author, the critic is only half-way, and by far the easier half. What is more difficult, is to show why the writing has been attributed to that author, when it was so attributed and by whom. On these points I have no hesitation in saying that you often find the critic giving as an established fact what is merely his own opinion, one frequently also which is quite hypothetical. We are told that the psalm

of Moses never was written by him; why? Let us remember first that philological reasons do not exist. This psalm was transcribed, probably twice, from cuneiform and from Aramaic, like other psalms, before it reached its present form. To whom did it occur to mention the name of Moses in connection with this psalm? Let the critic answer, not by what he imagines, but let him adduce proofs and bring well established facts.

Judging from the contents of this psalm, since we have not to consider its form, the thoughts which inspire it are so well in harmony with the character of Moses and the conditions in which he lived in the desert, that we see no reason to throw aside the tradition, which is anterior to the third century, since it is already in the LXX. Moses, like all the prophets, could be occasionally a poet.

The Tabernacle

We shall not follow the Israelites in their long journey through the desert. The direction they took, the stations where they stopped during that long wandering, all these questions are the objects of lively discussions among scholars and travellers. One thing seems certain, that they must have spent the greater part of the forty years near Kadesh, in the northern region of the peninsula.

We should like merely to direct the attention of our readers to the considerable changes produced in our views on the books describing the legislation by the fact that Moses wrote in Babylonian cuneiform. The books in their present form are translations, therefore the Lower Criticism, "which has to do with letters, words and sentences as such, without regard to their literary form or meaning," has no longer any *locus standi* here, and the Higher Criticism, which "builds on the Lower Criticism as its foundation when it takes the text of Scripture

from the hands of Lower Criticism and studies it as a literature" (Briggs), sees its base disappear from under its feet.

Let us take the description of the Tabernacle and of the ark of the Covenant. All this part of the book of Exodus is attributed by the critics to the document called P, the Priestly Code, which at first was thought to be the most ancient, but now is asserted to be the most recent, being said to be post-exilian. Wellhausen fixes its date at about 444. Ezra is generally supposed to be its author.

"The priest-code is realistic, and its realism is that of the wilderness, of the wanderings and nomadic life . . . it seems unlikely that it should be pure invention, or the elaboration of an ideal which could not escape anachronisms in some particulars. But if the fundamental legislation is Mosaic, why might not the priestly compiler, taking his stand in the wilderness of the wanderings, have been true to his historic and ideal standpoint?" This view is advocated by Dr. Briggs, one of the most conservative among the critics, who admits that the fundamental legislation is Mosaic, and that Moses is not a mere name. However, according to this learned scholar's idea, the narrator who describes the wanderings in the desert and some of the most striking episodes, such as the constitution of the Tabernacle and the ark, is a man who lived six or seven hundred years afterwards, not very long after the captives had returned from Babylon, at a time when all the intercourse of the Palestinian as well as the Egyptian Jews was with Persia; so far so that they had adopted the Mesopotamian writing, Aramaic. Under such circumstances there arose this author, remarkably well informed in the ways of desert life, as well as in history: and his information extended not

only to important facts, but even to detail and to features of the civilization of Egypt, a country where most probably he had never been.

Let us follow what is written in Scripture. The Israelites had left Egypt, a country where they could see a great number of temples which were supposed to be the abodes of the divinity. Some of them were of gigantic proportions ; they generally were built of strong materials and, as the founders engraved in their inscriptions, intended to last as long as heaven. In the desert of Sinai the Hebrews had received the law of the Lord, they had witnessed the scene of the giving of the law. On the third day, when it was morning, there were thunders and lightning and a thick cloud upon the mound, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, and they had trembled and stood afar off.

Afterwards they had again heard Moses receiving God's commandment (Exod. xx. 22) : " Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make other gods with Me : gods of silver, or gods of gold ye shall not make unto Me. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings . . . in every place where I record My name I will come unto thee and bless thee. And if thou make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone." This is the regulation for the worship of the Israelites : they were to bring sacrifices and burnt-offerings to the altar. But there was as yet no sign of the presence of Jehovah among them, no place considered as the abode of God. The erection of such a place seemed a natural consequence of the covenant which the Lord had made with His people, the covenant which had been concluded at a great sacrifice when the people had been sprinkled with blood. Therefore the Lord spoke

unto Moses and commanded him that the children of Israel should make Him an offering, every man who was willing, of precious metals, and the valuables which they possessed. " And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them " (Exod. xxv. 8).

The first part of this sanctuary, that which was particularly considered as the abode of God, was the ark. " And they shall make me an ark of acacia wood, and thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown (rim or moulding) round about." Further on it is related that the ark was made of acacia wood by a man " called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur of the tribe of Judah, who was filled with the Spirit of God in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold and in silver and in brass, and in the cutting of stone for setting, and in carving of wood to work in all manner of workmanship " (Exod. xxi. 2, 3).

Thus the man who had to do all the work in the ark and the Tabernacle is an Israelite of the tribe of Judah ; he is not a stranger, but probably learnt his art in Egypt ; for all the kinds of work enumerated there are exactly such as were produced by Egyptian workmen, and had probably been seen repeatedly by the Hebrews while they were staying in the country.

Once again I have to ask the question, How could an author of the time of the Persian kings know the name of the workman who had been entrusted with that important work ? How had his name been preserved, and not only his own, but that of his father and his grandfather ? Certainly it did not come down through seven or eight centuries by oral tradition. It must have been recorded in some written document. Ark and Tabernacle had

disappeared when the author of the Priestly Code is supposed to have written. It would be strange in that case that the name of the artist who made them in a remote past should have survived. According to the critics, the writer was true to his historical and ideal standpoint. This can be admitted as possible in reference to the great lines of the narrative and the general features of desert life. But when it comes to definite facts, to points of detail like this, the writer must have had some document on which he might base his statement, and this document could not be of a date very different from the acts it related. It is far more credible that we owe the name and the information about the artist to Moses himself, rather than to an unknown author living, several centuries later, in a distant country. We shall come to the same conclusion about various other points.

"They shall make an ark of acacia wood," the staves to carry it, the table, the boards, the Tabernacle, every thing in wood is to be made in *shittim* wood, the acacia. The name of the acacia does not appear anywhere else except in Isaiah xli. 19, where the prophet, describing the future state of felicity, says: "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia tree and the myrtle . . ." We do not find the acacia among the materials for the construction of the Temple. The beams, pillars, floor are made of cedar, the cherubim of the doors of the oracle of olive wood, and the others of fir wood or cypress. Since the Israelites were settled in Palestine, the tree considered as fit for sacred construction and worthy of this employment was cedar. The house of God, the abode of the Lord, could not be made of any other wood. When Nathan brings to David the commandment not to build a temple, we read this (2 Sam. vii. 5): "Shalt thou build Me a house for Me to dwell in? for I have not dwelt in an

house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spoke I a word with any of the judges (margin) of Israel, whom I commanded to feed My people Israel, asking: Why have ye not built Me an house of cedar?" An Israelite did not conceive an abode for God being made of any other material than cedar. This wood, and the cypress, was also used by the Assyrians for their sacred constructions. They speak of cedar wood which came from the Amanus as well as from Lebanon.

On the contrary, cedar does not appear in the construction of the ark and the Tabernacle. They are to be made of acacia wood. By this name we are to understand the tree called by the botanists *acacia seyal.* This tree is found in Egypt, and the Egyptians made great use of it. They used it for making furniture and boats. It was the favourite wood for the doors of temples. In the course of time it takes a fine black colour, which the ancients imitated. It was also used sometimes for coffins. Outside of Egypt the *acacia seyal* is found in the Sinaitic peninsula, and near the Dead Sea, but not further north. It may reach a great height, but it is cut down too often when young by the Bedouins for making charcoal.

Acacia is a tree of the Sinaitic desert, and it must have been rather abundant at the time, since among the offerings the Israelites are ordered to bring acacia wood, probably felled, cut and gathered around their camp. But it is not a Palestinian tree. Except for a few bushes, no acacia trees are found in Palestine, especially not in the north. However, in the Shephelah—what used to be the coast of the Philistines—some fine specimens are found,

which are attributed by botanists to cultivation, but the origin of which goes back to a very high antiquity. The important point is that the acacia is a Sinaitic and not a Palestinian tree : that after the conquest of Canaan it was entirely put aside for sacred constructions, and superseded by cedar. Here the narrator is entirely in accordance with the local conditions, with the nature of the desert and what could be found there. Can we suppose that the post-exilian writer is so true to his historical standpoint, that he can describe a kind of construction which had been out of use for centuries both in Palestine and Mesopotamia ? Does it not seem more likely that the narrator had been in the desert himself, and pictured what he had seen ?

Desert life, with a strong Egyptian influence in everything referring to workmanship, this is what we find in the narrative. For instance, in what is said of metal. It is used for overlaying objects made of wood. When it is used alone, as for the candlestick, it is said that it will be beaten. Once only is it said that the metal is cast : " And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for the ark." This is in full agreement with what we find in Egypt. There, whenever metal work is applied to an object of large size, the metal was not cast, it was beaten. The action of fire, the melting of the metal, was resorted to only for small objects like jewels. In the time of the Sixth Dynasty, we have two statues of King Pepi and of his son. It is possible that some small parts may have been cast, like the face, the fingers and the toes, but the whole body is made of hammered slabs, nailed upon a core which probably was made of wood. The Egyptians seemed to have been particularly skilled in the use of the hammer. They were very clever in beating the metal so as to produce very thin plates of gold or silver, which

afterwards were overlaid upon wooden, or even stone, sculptures. We have still a few statuettes covered with a very thin sheet of gold and silver, and it is probable that some of the wooden statues which have been preserved were covered in that way, but that their valuable casing has attracted robbers. For instance, the head of the cow found at Deir el Bahari was covered with gold; a great number of mummy cases were ornamented with thin gold which was cut away by robbers. Therefore, what is said about the ark and the Tabernacle—that all the wood on both sides of the ark and the staves for carrying it were overlaid with gold—is quite Egyptian.

It is curious to see that the only part of the ark which is cast are the rings of gold for the staves of the ark. If we look at the pictures representing the tributes brought to the Egyptians by foreign nations from the south, the gold is generally in rings or in powder. This shows that the African nations, less civilized than the Egyptians, knew how to cast gold in rings, so that this work must have been familiar to the old Egyptians.

All the work commanded and described in the book of Exodus could be done by any man skilled in Egyptian handicraft. The few tools he wanted, both for carpentry and for jewellery, could be easily carried on a journey. Even now in Egyptian villages, a carpenter who has to make a piece of furniture does not go to his workshop; he generally has none. He takes the two or three necessary tools, and goes to the house where he is required and where he finds the wood provided for him. All the woodwork for the ark and Tabernacle is very simple and could easily be made anywhere.

The same is the case with the metal work. It is not complicated. It consists chiefly of beaten work made with a hammer. There are no large cast objects; it

would have been impossible to have a sufficient furnace and to make the moulds in the desert. Besides, it is doubtful whether the Egyptians ever made large cast pieces. We find no large bronze statues, such as the Greeks made so numerously, except in quite late times. Here again in Exodus we have a small detail which makes it unlikely that this description should be due to a late author of post-exilian time. How is it that such objects of secondary importance, like the rings through which were inserted the staves for carrying the ark, are distinctly said to have been cast, while the whole work was beaten? It seems most improbable that such a small point should have been preserved by tradition. A narrator writing several centuries afterwards would perhaps have said that Bezalel made four rings; he would not have distinguished the two kinds of work.

The breastplate is also quite Egyptian. Several similar jewels for kings and queens have been preserved. They are of gold, with inlaid precious stones. Those of the Twelfth Dynasty, much older than the arrival of the Jews into Egypt, are particularly beautiful. Therefore a skilled workman, coming from Egypt, could easily make the breastplate for Aaron.

"The women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, the blue, the purple, the scarlet, and the fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom, spun the goats' hair" (Exod. xxxv. 25, 26). This again may be done in the desert, and bears an Egyptian character. Egypt was the great centre of the manufacture of linen in antiquity. The considerable amount which has been preserved, from the Old Empire down to Roman times, some of it of the finest quality; the quantity of linen used for mummifying; all this shows that the fabrication of linen was one of

the chief industries of the country, and that a great use of it must have been made in common life. I cannot go into the question whether flax or cotton was used for it. We are not sure of the sense of the Hebrew words, and we must suppose that they had a precise meaning as in our language.

Probably the Israelite women had brought from Egypt the linen they offered for the Tabernacle and which they spun : the weaving is said to have been done, or at least directed, by Bezalel and his assistant Oholiab. As for the curtains of goats' hair, the material was in abundance, and it could be fabricated easily by the women. It very likely was the same kind of stuff which the peasant women still make in some parts of Italy from the hair of their goats. All this description is in conformity with the way of living of a powerful nomad tribe.

It is said that the Israelites carried away a great deal when they left ; that, in their hurry to be delivered from them, the Egyptians gave them " jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment." It must have been as it is now with the Arab women who often carry all their fortune in jewels with which they adorn themselves ; they wear heavy necklaces, sometimes very valuable, which are their investments, all they possess. In a numerous tribe, if the women sacrificed generously their jewels, it might amount to a large quantity of gold which was afterwards hammered and used for plating and overlaying wood such as the staves of the ark, or the mercy-seat. In those cases, the sheet of gold was very thin. As for the candlestick made of pure gold of beaten work, it must have been like the statue of Pepi, made of thick plates fixed on a core probably of wood.

In the description of garments, and curtains, and

other pieces of textile stuff, there is a word of which it seems to me doubtful whether it has been rightly understood. It is said of the screen of the tent (xxvi. 36), "Thou shalt make a screen of blue and purple and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer." Of the ephod it is said (xxviii. 6): "And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple, scarlet and fine twined linen, the work of the cunning workman." Between the screen and the ephod, there is the difference that in the screen no gold is mentioned, and the work is done by the "embroiderer," while there is gold in the ephod and the work is done by the "cunning workman." The word translated "cunning workman" occurs several times, generally in connection with metal work (xxviii 15; xxvi. 1, 31; xxxvi. 8; xxxix. 8). Have we not here in the ephod an example of what is found in the Mycenean tombs, very thin gold ornaments in the form of flowers or disks fastened to a garment, rather than a metal thread which would have complicated the weaving?

The small pieces of jewellery may have been melted, as the jewellers of the present day melt them in the villages. This does not require a very big fire. But I do not believe that the golden calf was cast. The words saying that Aaron fashioned it with a graving tool (xxxii. 4) seem to indicate that it was sculptured and plated afterwards, so as to look like a molten calf, like the statue of Pepi of which one may say that it looks exactly like a molten figure. Besides, we have no indication as to the size of the calf.

Two of the coverings are said (xxvi. 14) to be ram's skin dyed red, with a covering of sealskin above. Rams' skins were very easy to obtain and to dye, but it is somewhat strange to find skins of an animal called, according to the translator, either seal, porpoise, or dugong. Though

this sea animal is said to be abundant in the Red Sea, it is difficult to imagine the Israelites engaged in hunting it, and it seems natural to follow the LXX, who translated "of blue colour," being dyed rams' skins.

The pillars were to rest on sockets, which may be either silver or brass. I found a socket of that kind at Bubastis. It consists of a cube of bronze, on the top of which is a depression in which the pillar rested, or on which the door turned if it was a hinge. Those made for the Tabernacle must have had a similar form.

I shall not go into the discussion on the reconstruction of the Tabernacle and its dimensions, but I must insist again on the remarkable conformity of the description with the local and historical circumstances. There is absolutely nothing revealing a writer of the fifth century, who would have been rather under Persian influence. For instance, speaking of curtains and embroidery beautifully worked and used for sacred purposes, a writer of that time would mention Zidon and Zidonian women. On the contrary, the author seems to know Egyptian industry very well, but never to have gone further than the desert. Egypt and desert produces alone are adduced. This is particularly striking in the case of acacia wood, considering that after the arrival of the Hebrews in Canaan, it is never mentioned again and dropped entirely out of use for purposes of worship.

Is not Moses the man who was most able to write such an account, to record the name of the skilled artists who had achieved the construction and all the works of art it contained, and to go into such minute details about the ornaments, the colour and size of each curtain and covering, the material out of which it had to be made? Can we suppose that so detailed a tradition had lasted

unwritten more than eight hundred years and outlived the Tabernacle and the Ark?

Deuteronomy

I should like, before leaving the subject of the composition of the Pentateuch, to revert to the question of Deuteronomy which I have raised elsewhere.[1] The critics are nearly unanimous in asserting that the book of the law discovered by Hilkiah under Josiah was Deuteronomy, or part of it. In this I fully agree with the critics. For Deuteronomy is exactly the book which might be found under such circumstances.

Deuteronomy is said to be the last words spoken to the people by Moses when he was going to disappear; when his earnest request to be allowed to "go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan" had been finally refused. Israel is on the verge of Canaan, the conquest of which is assured. Therefore the language of Moses is somewhat different from what it was in the desert. He supposed that, like all neighbouring nations, the Israelites will have a king, and he devises some laws concerning him. But what he alludes to several times is that there will be the place "which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes, to put His name there," and to make it His Habitation. Since every Israelite was to have a fixed abode, Moses assumed that the Lord also will have one which He shall choose. He cannot imagine that when each man in Israel will be settled in his habitation "the Lord will have none, and His habitation will still be a tent going from place to place." He, Moses, cannot say where it will be, since he is not allowed to enter the country.

[1] *The Discovery of the book of the Law, under King Josiah* (S.P.C.K.).

The critics lay much stress on the fact that Deuteronomy prescribes that sacrifices must be offered in one single place, and that this unity of worship, as well as of supreme judiciary, was only realized much later, after the building of the temple; so that the composition of Deuteronomy must be put at a much later epoch than Moses, not long before Josiah. But the discrepancy between the law, if there is one,[1] and the practice at the time of the Judges down to Solomon's reign may be easily explained. The habitation of the Lord which Moses foresaw, which seemed to him the necessary consequence of the Israelites settling down each in his house and under his fig tree, never was chosen, never was singled out among the tribes, until Solomon's time. The Israelites therefore could not bring their sacrifices to the place which the Lord had chosen, since there was no such place, and the Ark was still erratic, deposited in a tent, and could be moved from one place to another. There was no habitation of the Lord. This state of things is described when Nathan said to David: "Thus saith the Lord . . . I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. (2 Samuel vii. 6). . . . In all places wherein I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word with any of the judges of Israel when I commanded to feed my people, saying: Why have ye not built Me an house of cedar? . . ."(1 Chron. xxviii. 6).

The choice of the place and the building of the house was to be done only by a man whose special mission it should be. Moses died before having passed the Jordan, Joshua did not feel called to accomplish such a task, and when David thought of it, when, as he says, it was in his heart "to build a house of rest for the ark of the

[1] See p. 145.

covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God," (1 Chron. xxviii 2.) he was not allowed to do it. "God said unto me: thou shalt not build an house for My name, because thou art a man of war. . . . Solomon thy son shall build My house and My courts. . . ." Thus from the time of the conquest to the reign of David's son, part of the Mosaic law could not be accomplished, because there was no habitation of the Lord, and no one to build it.

Solomon is the king appointed to build the cedar house. In order to establish for ever that the temple is the place "chosen by the Lord to put His name in," he does what the Assyrian kings often did, he hides in the wall as foundation deposit a cuneiform tablet of the law of Moses, of that book which is a summary of it, and which speaks of that place "which the Lord will choose." The book remained buried in the wall until great repairs made in the temple revealed it to Hilkiah.

It is hardly necessary to repeat the narrative of the discovery of the book of the law. The temple was in the hands of a great number of workmen and masons, repairing cracks in the walls and using for that purpose hewn stone. One may fancy that they came upon the cuneiform tablet, and did not pay any attention to it, as common workmen or masons would do now not only in repairing old walls but even in excavations. Hilkiah found it in the rubbish, or he picked it out when it fell out of its hiding-place; and when Shaphan the scribe, the secretary of the king, came to see the payment of the cost of the repairs, "Hilkiah said unto Shaphan the scribe: I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again." (2 Kings xxii. 8).

The narrative is very brief, but it shows very clearly

how the scene took place. When Shaphan comes into the temple, Hilkiah tells him that he has found the book, and hands it over to Shaphan, who reads it aloud. Afterwards he goes back to the king to bring him his report, as he was ordered to do, and he reads the book again to the king. When Hilkiah says he has found the book, why does he give it to Shaphan; why does he not read it himself? Because most likely he could not read cuneiform. He knew that the law was written in such characters, he also could suppose that a book coming from the foundations of the temple must belong to the law; but it was the secretary of the king, the man who had to correspond with the Assyrians, who read the writing which had been that of Moses, which was still used for official documents, and which had not yet altogether been superseded by Aramaic.

Summing up again what seems to me the result of the excavations of the last thirty years, namely, that the oldest books of the Hebrews prior to Solomon's time have been written in Babylonian cuneiform, I should like my readers to observe that in this long discussion, I have adhered strictly to the text of Scripture; for instance, for the Pentateuch, I know only of Moses the author, and Ezra the compiler. On the other hand, the numerous writers, of whom for Genesis there are seven according to Kautzsch and Socin, have been called into existence by the critics, without any trace whatever being left in the text of their name, time, origin or dates. They are mere literary creations.

The Archives

Before leaving the books of Moses, the cuneiform tablets which were the work of the great legislator, we have to raise an important question. How were these

tablets preserved? How did one generation hand them over to the next? Here, I must say frankly, we are entirely in the field of hypothesis. For we have no indication whatever in Scripture which might put us in the right track. So that we can reason only from analogy, and see what the neighbouring nations did with their tablets.

Documents of that kind were of great value. They were not like inscriptions on potsherds or on a scrap of paper. It would not have been necessary to take the trouble to bake the clay on which the text was engraved, if it were not for the desire that they should last as would be the case with religious texts, laws, literary compositions, contracts, legal documents, such as are found in great number. These tablets were generally collected in deposists, archives or libraries. Several of them are famous, such as the library of Assurbanipal at Kuyunjik, discovered by Layard, part of which has been brought to the British Museum. It contained thousands of tablets of all kinds, grammar and language, literature, religion, mythology, magic, everything concerning the administration of the country, the treaties with neighbouring nations, civil laws and contracts, even natural science. This is the most considerable collection found as yet, and its exploration is not even yet finished.

Another library of the same kind, to which belonged perhaps also a school, has been discovered at Nippur, and has also yielded thousands of tablets, some of which belong to the early Babylonian civilization, so that it is possible that the Assyrian king, in collecting his library, may have made use of the older one at Nippur. It seems that in those libraries the clay tablets were gathered and preserved in a methodical manner, placed on shelves of wood or clay, or sometimes stored in jars.

At Boghaz Keui also, the tablets were found in a place of small area, which the discoverer, Dr. Winckler, calls a part of the royal archives, very much ruined, and of which probably the greater part is lost.

At Tel-Taannek, in Palestine, the explorer Dr. Sellin, who discovered there a few cuneiform tablets, speaks of a small library contained in a large clay box. This is what is recommended by Jeremiah (xxxii. 14): "Take these deeds, this deed of the purchase, both that which is sealed and the deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days."

In Egypt, the precious archives of Tel-el-Amarna were said by the natives to have been contained in an earthen vessel or jar. It is but seldom that a cuneiform tablet is found isolated or alone. There are generally a certain number of them, a collection more or less numerous according to the importance of the place and of the nation. We may suppose that the Israelites followed the custom of the Mesopotamians, their fathers, and that they deposited their tablets in a city which thus became their "book-town." It is possible that it was also the custom of the inhabitants of Canaan. We hear of a city called Kirjath-sepher, a city destroyed by Caleb's brother (Joshua xv. 15, 16), "the city of books," which may have been a place where existed such a deposit of documents. This is confirmed by the LXX, where the name is translated *Πόλις γραμμάτων*, the city of writings, of written documents, *civitas litterarum* by the Vulgate, and by the Coptic.

Did the Hebrews have a city of archives, or at least a place where their religious or legal documents were deposited, such as the tablets written by Moses which constituted the Pentateuch? Here we are obliged to resort again to a mere hypothesis, since Scripture is absolutely silent on that point. I think Hebron may have been that

place, or perhaps Shechem, but I rather incline to Hebron. Hebron was given to the tribe of Judah and to Caleb, the only survivor of the spies sent by Moses forty years before; to him it had been promised that the land wherein his foot had trodden should be his inheritance (Joshua xiv. 9). He himself, though he was fourscore and five years old, was as strong as in the days when Moses sent him, and his family seems to have been very warlike and brave. They had to conquer the most difficult part of the country, that inhabited by Anakim: they smote and destroyed Kirjath-sepher, and Hebron was given to Caleb, "because that he followed the Lord, the God of Israel." One may well suppose that the members of this family were chosen to be the guardians of the books which had been brought from Egypt.

Besides, Hebron was a place where the Israelites had ancestral traditions. There, Abraham had purchased the field of Ephron the Hittite, in order to bury his dead Sarah, who had died at the age of hundred and seven and twenty years, in the cave of Machpelah (Gen. xxiii.): "And the field and the cave that is therein was made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying place by the children of Heth." When Abraham died, Isaac and Ishmael, his sons, buried him in the cave of Machpelah. Esau and Jacob did the same for Isaac, and when he was dying, Jacob charged his sons to bury him with his fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, naming all those who had preceded him, the last of whom was Leah, his wife, whom he himself had buried (Gen. xlix. 29).

This family sepulchre in Canaan, this cave in which three generations had found their rest, was the lasting pledge that the land was their inheritance and that they could claim its possession. It seems natural that the writings which recorded God's covenant with Abraham and with

his people, what may be called the deeds on which rested their character of the elect among the nations, should have been brought to the same place, to Hebron, in the keeping of the faithful Caleb's family and of the Levites to whom the city was given.

It is perhaps owing to the character of Hebron that it became David's capital until he conquered Jerusalem and built there his palace. Saul was dead, and David, who had become king, did not know where he would settle and establish what we should call the seat of the government. It is said "that David inquired of the Lord, saying: Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said unto him: Go up. And David said: Whither shall I go up? And he said: Unto Hebron" (2 Sam. xii. 1). Then all the tribes of Israel came to him, paid him homage, and anointed him as king. David reigned there more than seven years.

It seems probable that when the Temple of Solomon was built, when Jerusalem and His sanctuary became the place which the Lord God had chosen "to cause His name to dwell in," the archives, that is, the law and the books of Moses, were brought there, perhaps also the later ones. In Assyrian temples as well as in Egyptian, libraries—archives—were generally in the immediate vicinity or were part of the construction. Shall we find anything of the archives of the Temple of Jerusalem? Has anything of them been preserved? Have they escaped the havoc and destruction produced by the successive sieges and by the numerous invaders whose fire and sword have too often brought ruin on the platform where the temple stood? Will these invaluable treasures ever be recovered? That is the secret of the future.

The reason why, until now, the epigraphic results of the excavations have been so scanty in Palestine is perhaps

the fact that the cuneiform documents are generally collected and stored in libraries, or archives, and not scattered all over the country. The discovery of one of these deposits, which may only have been a box full of documents, might have the most weighty consequences, and change entirely the current points of view. The best instance of this is the discovery at Tel-el-Amarna. But for this jar, dug by the fellaheen out of a mound of Middle Egypt, we should be still in complete ignorance as to the language written in Palestine before Moses and after his time, and critics might still support the view that in the time of Moses the Hebrews had no writing in which his books might be composed. Afterwards the discoveries at Susa, and at Boghaz-keui have shown to what extent Babylonian cuneiform had spread over Western Asia, and it would be certainly surprising if a small country like Palestine were an exception and had a book-writing of its own.

PART II

The Later Books

CHAPTER V

THE PAPYRI FROM ELEPHANTINÉ

The Colony at Elephantiné

NEXT to the finding of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, and as weighty in its bearing on all the questions concerning the books of the Old Testament, is the discovery, in the ruins at Elephantiné, of the Aramaic papyri left by a Jewish colony on that spot. They were all dug out of the mounds of the old city, from the heaps of decayed bricks which the natives carry away as manure for their fields.

The first lot was purchased from dealers by M. Robert Mond and Lady William Cecil: they were said by the dealers to come from Assuan; but subsequent excavations made by M. Rubensohn at Elephantiné, the picturesque island in front of Assuan, have proved that they came from the same spot, where he himself discovered another batch, still more valuable than the first since it contains historical documents the date of which is well known.

The greatest part of these documents belong to the time when Egypt was under Persian rule. They extend from the twenty-seventh year of Darius I (494 B.C.) to the fifth year of Amyztaeus, the native ruler who reigned after the Egyptians had shaken off the Persian yoke; thus they nearly cover the whole of the fifth century B.C., when the Persian Empire was at its height.

The men who wrote these papyri were Jews; they knew

and observed the feast of the Passover. Many of the names quoted are those of the Israelites in Canaan, and they had a temple to their god Yaho. It seems that they were a military colony. They were settled in Elephantiné with their families, and they were divided into six "standards." Nevertheless, it may be questioned whether they were real soldiers, and whether they left their country to be mercenaries forming a garrison. It seems that they were organized in "standards" so as to be able to fight in case of need. Since they were settled on the southern border of the country, they might be attacked by invaders coming from Nubia; therefore it was necessary that they should resist and repel their attacks, or at least delay their march sufficiently for troops to arrive to protect the country. Their organization was exactly similar to that of the tribes crossing the desert (Num. ii. and iii.). Then the tribes marched by their "standards," with the ensigns of their fathers' houses, and there was a prince for each tribe. The children of Israel in the desert could hardly be called an army, but they were sufficiently organized to fight the enemies whom they might encounter on their way to Canaan.

Long before the reign of Darius, the Jews had begun to go to Egypt and to settle there, probably out of fear of the Assyrians. It is quite possible that some of them were among the foreign mercenaries whom Psammetichus II led to war against the Ethiopians; but the Jews who emigrated to Egypt were not soldiers only. They went there with their families because Egypt was a country apparently more peaceful and more settled than their own. Although they did not give up their nationality and their worship, since they built a temple to their God whom they call Yaho, a return to Egypt was not in accordance with the religious tradition, and the

law, especially was it against the strong warnings of Deuteronomy, and therefore Jeremiah spares no effort for preventing his countrymen from deserting the land of their fathers for Egypt. Over and over again we hear the prophet warning the Jews against this flight.

Among the first words which the prophet had to cry in the ears of Jerusalem are these (ii. 18) : " And now what hast thou to do in the way to Egypt, to drink the waters of Shihor ; " Shihor being the first branch of the Nile which they reached. There they will not find the peace for which they are looking : " Thou shalt be ashamed of Egypt also, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria " (iv. 26). On another occasion, in the time of Zedekiah, Jeremiah utters this threat (xxiv. 8) : " Thus saith the Lord : So will I give up . . . the residue of Jerusalem and them that dwell in the land of Egypt." After the capture of Jerusalem a great number of Jews wished to go to Egypt (xlii.). The prophet then " cried in their ears " this curse against those who should go : " Then it shall come to pass, that the sword which ye fear shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine whereof ye are afraid, shall follow hard after you there in Egypt ; and there you shall die . . . O remnant of Judah, go ye not into Egypt : know certainly that I have testified unto you this day." All warnings and reproofs were in vain ; they carried the prophet with them to the city of Daphnae, where Jeremiah had to do the symbolical act of " taking great stones " and " hiding them in mortar in the brickwork, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes " (xliii. 9).

It was not at this moment only that the Jews went to Egypt, and Jeremiah does not speak only to those who emigrated at the time of the Assyrian conquest. One of the chapters of the prophet's book begins thus (xliv. 1) :

"The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwelt in the land of Egypt which dwelt at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros." Migdol was a fortress in the north-east of Egypt, the Magdolon of the Itinerary, said to be twelve Roman miles south of Pelusiam. It was the first city reached by travellers coming from Palestine, who had followed the coast of the Mediterranean. Tahpanhes, the Daphnae of Herodotus on the Pelusiac branch, not far from the fortress of Zar, was one of the cities reached by travellers coming from Canaan by a more southerly route. It became important during the reign of Psammetichus I (c. 664 B.C.), who established there a camp of mercenaries, among whom may have been some Jews. Professor Flinders Petrie, who explored the place now called Tel Defenneh, traced there the residence of the king, which is still called the "Palace of the Jew's daughter." These two cities, Migdol and Tahpanhes, were on the extreme border of the country, and might be places of refuge as well as permanent settlements. Noph, or Moph, is translated by the LXX and the Vulgate, Memphis. This city had a greater importance at that time than under the powerful Dynasties Eighteen and Nineteen because the political life had passed over from Thebes to the Delta. Memphis was at the head of the Delta, and in the heart of the country. Hosea speaks clearly of a permanent establishment of the Jews at Memphis (ix. 6): "For, lo, they are gone away from destruction, yet Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them." The Israelites went farther. They settled in Upper Egypt, called Pathros, the Semitic transcription of the Egyptian word meaning the "land of the south." Pathros is sometimes joined with Mizraim, which in that case seems to refer to Lower Egypt, for instance in the passage of Jeremiah

(xliv. 15) : " Even all the people that dwelt in the land of Mizraim, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah saying . . . " It may be questioned whether here the " land of Mizraim " does not apply to the Delta, so that it would come to this sense : in Lower and in Upper Egypt.

Ezekiel gives us a curious piece of historical information about Pathros. Speaking of the Egyptians, who after forty years will be gathered from the peoples whither they were scattered, the prophet says (xxix. 14) : " I will cause them to return into the land of Pathros, into the land of their birth," or " origin " (margin). The latest discoveries show that the civilization of Egypt came down the river, and that the kingdom of Upper Egypt is older than that of the Delta, the origin of the civilization being African.

Pathros, being Upper Egypt, included the settlement of the Jews at Elephantiné and it may be that some of the inhabitants of this settlement were among the Jews who answered Jeremiah's rebuke by these words (xlv. 16) : " As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly perform every word that is gone forth out of our mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her." There were among the refugees men who served " other gods " and who were hostile to the worship of Yaho and to His prophet.

There seems to be an indirect allusion to the Jewish colony at Elephantiné and at Assuan in a passage of Ezekiel. The prophet describes the complete destruction which will fall upon Egypt (xxix. 10) : " I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation." This calamity will strike the whole country from one limit to the other, from north to south ; and here, instead of indicating the limits as the Egyptians would do, Ezekiel

quotes the two Jewish settlements on the border, as the margin reads: "From Migdol to Syene, even unto the border of Ethiopia." This translation agrees with the LXX *ἀπὸ Μαγδώλου καὶ Συήνης καὶ ἕως ὁρίων Αἰθιοπίας*. In the next chapter it is even clearer (xxx. 6; quoting again the margin): "They also that uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her power shall come down from Migdol to Syene; they shall fall in it by the sword. Here also we read in the LXX: *ἀπὸ Μαγδώλου ἕως Συήνης μαχαίρᾳ πεσοῦνται*. The prophet writes for Jews, and he would be much better understood by them when he quotes the most northern and the most southern cities which they knew that some of their countrymen inhabited.

Thus from the time of Hosea, who lived during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, we see the Jews going to Egypt, taking refuge there; not only in the north of the country near Palestine, but even in Upper Egypt.

This is confirmed by a prophecy of Isaiah (xix. 18): "In that day there shall be five cities in the land of Egypt that speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of Hosts; in that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord." This passage must not be taken as historical, but it shows that Isaiah had this migration to Egypt before his eyes; the idea of Jewish settlements in Egypt was far from being strange to his mind, and he may have known that in his time some of his countrymen had gone to the valley of the Nile and established themselves there.

The military colony at Elephantiné was only one of these settlements, and it is natural that, being on the border, the colonists should have been employed as soldiers for the protection of the country. It is quite possible that the same thing took place at Tahpanhes (Daphnae),

where, we know from Herodotus, there was a garrison of foreign mercenaries. It seems erroneous to think that the Israelites came to Egypt only as soldiers. They were tempted to emigrate to Egypt probably because they felt their own country unsafe owing to the growth of the Assyrian power.

The Elephantiné papyri have taught us these two extremely important facts. The Israelites brought to Egypt their worship; they built a temple to Yaho at Elephantiné, and also they brought from their country their language, which was not Hebrew, but Aramaic. That this language was used by the Jews at Elephantiné was as great a surprise as the revelation made by the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna that Babylonian cuneiform was written all over Palestine at the time of Moses. As we shall see, it throws a peculiar light on the question of the writing of the later books of the Old Testament.

The Temple

The most interesting of the documents from Elephantiné is found in two copies, one of which is better preserved than the other; its date is the year 407 B.C., during the reign of Darius Nothus. It is a letter written to Bagoas, the Persian governor of Judea. This Bagoas is known to Josephus; he was a successor of Nehemiah as governor of Judea; so likewise the high priest in Jerusalem, Johanan, is called by Josephus *Ἰωαννης*. The document is so important, and it brought to light so many new facts, that I am obliged to quote it in full, using the admirable translation of Professor Sachau, the editor of the second find of those texts.

"To our Lord Bagoas, the governor of Juda, his servants Yedoniah and his companions the priests of the fortress of Yeb.

"May the God of heaven salute our Lord at all times, and increase his favour with King Darius and the sons of the royal palace a thousand times more than now, and give thee long life. Be happy and strong at all times.

"Thus speaks thy servant Yedoniah and his companions. In the mouth of Tammuz in the fourteenth year of King Darius (July, 410), when Arsames had left to go to the King, the priests of the god Chnub in the fortress of Yeb made a conspiracy with Hydarnes, who was headman here, with the following purpose: the temple of the God Yaho in the fortress of Yeb must disappear from there. Therefore Hydarnes,[1] the accursed, sent a letter to his son Nepayan, who was military chief in the fortress of Yeb, saying: The temple in the fortress of Yeb must be destroyed. Then Nepayan brought Egyptian and other soldiers, they entered the fortress of Yeb with their tools (?) they invaded the temple and levelled it to the ground; the stone pillars which were there they destroyed, and also the fine doors built with stones they destroyed, as well as their wooden leaves and their sockets of bronze. The roof of cedar wood, the furniture (?) and everything was burnt. The gold and silver vessels and the objects which were in the said temple they carried away and took possession of.

"Already in the time of the Kings of Egypt, our fathers had built the temple in the fortress of Yeb. And when Cambyses entered Egypt he saw this temple built; and while the temples of the gods of Egypt were all pulled down, no damage was done to this temple by any one.

"Since this has been done to us, we, our wives and children, we have worn mourning clothes, we have fasted and prayed Yaho the Lord of heaven Who made us acquainted as to Hydarnes the accursed (?)." A few

[1] *Waidereng*, which Eduard Meyer considers as the Persian name Hydarnes.

obscure sentences indicate that they heard with pleasure that he had perished as well as those who had taken part in his criminal deeds.

" Also before this harm was done to us, we sent a letter to our Lord and to Johanan the high priest, and his fellows the priests of Jerusalem, and to Ostanes, the brother of Anani, and the principals among the Jews, but they sent no answer.

" Therefore since the month of Tammuz of the fourteenth year of King Darius, until the present day, we wear mourning clothes, we fast, our wives are like widows, we do not anoint ourselves with oil, nor do we drink wine. Also from that time until now, the seventeenth year of Darius, we have not brought unto the temple meal offerings, incense, or burnt offerings.

" Now thy servants Yedoniah, his fellows and all the Jews, the inhabitants of Yeb, say the following: When it pleases our Lord, remember this temple to build it up, since we are not allowed to build it up. Turn towards those who receive thy benefits and mercies. May a letter be sent from thee concerning the temple of the God Yaho, saying that it will be built up again, in the fortress of Yeb, as it was built before. In thy name they will bring meal offerings, incense and burnt offerings on the altar of the God Yaho, and we will pray for thee at all times, and our wives and our children, and all the Jews who are here, when it will have been done that this temple be built up again.

" And the merit for thee with Yaho the God of heaven will be greater than the merit of a man who brings him burnt offerings and sacrifices in the value of 1,000 talents. As for the gold, we have sent a message and given information. Also we have reported the whole of this in a letter in our name to Delayah and Shelemyah, the sons of Sanaballat the governor of Samaria.

"Arsames does not know anything of what has been done to us."

As Professor Sachau says, the excavations at Elephantiné have enriched our knowledge as to the Old Testament, by a new and most pregnant chapter. We hear, in this document, of events which took place when Egypt was under Persian dominion and was part of the Persian Empire. There was a satrap of Egypt, who is probably Arsames, mentioned twice in the letter. He must have been powerful, since if he had not been away on a visit to the king, his presence might have prevented the attack of Hydarnes against the Jews and their temple.

But what seems rather extraordinary is that the Jews of Elephantiné appeal not to the satrap nor to the king himself, but to the governor of Judea, Bagoas, a Persian also, and they do not ask for help, nor merely for his backing up the request, but for a direct order that the temple be rebuilt, for a letter saying that it was to be rebuilt, and that as before, the three kinds of offerings should be brought to the altar. Bagoas must therefore have had some special authority over the Jews in Egypt, and sufficient power to regulate everything concerning their worship. How far the authority of the governor of Judea extended over Egypt, and over Egyptian affairs, we do not know.

A curious detail, which reminds us strongly of eastern countries at the present day, is that this favour has to be paid for. The messenger who carries the letter has been instructed "as to the gold," very likely the sum that Bagoas has asked for beforehand, and which was to dispose him favourably towards the request of the Jews.

One of the most important facts contained in this letter is the statement that, already in the time of the Kings of Egypt, a temple had been built in the fortress of Yeb.

" In the time of the Kings of Egypt : " this formula is thoroughly Egyptian ; we find it constantly in the texts, with the meaning " long before." Here it has this special sense : the temple was raised before the Persian conquest, when the native Pharaohs were still on the throne.

The Egyptians at that time seem to have had no objection to the introduction of a foreign sanctuary and a foreign God into their land. Therefore the destruction of the edifice by Hydarnes and the Egyptians cannot be traced to religious hatred. Though the Egyptians in the time of their native rulers were not particularly pleased at the sight of this sanctuary to a strange God, they do not seem to have interfered with the worship, nor to have hindered it in any way. What may be considered as the cause of this sudden outburst of illwill, of the conspiracy of the Egyptians who succeeded in taking a Persian, Hydarnes, as their leader, is jealousy of the natives against the Jews. They had suffered in their religion and their worship at the hand of the Persian King. Cambyses had made a terrible havoc among the temples, even the most beautiful like those of Thebes ; their sacred animals had not been spared ; and in sight of this religious ruin, the sanctuary of the Jews stood intact ; it had not been touched, as we hear from the Jews themselves. Certainly this preservation of the Jewish temple must have appeared to the Egyptians as most offensive and arbitrary, and therefore its destruction was resolved upon and carried out. They took care to have a Persian leader, so that his action should not differ from what Cambyses had done.

At the time of the native Pharaohs there was a temple to Yaho, or Yahu. This name of their God is the Jehovah of our Bible, a wrong vocalization which should be read Yahveh. In this letter no other god is spoken of as being worshipped in the temple. He stands alone. The

building itself was large and even costly. Fine doors are spoken of, the posts of which were of stone; the roof was made of cedar wood. This shows that the Jewish colony at Elephantiné was, already under the Pharaohs, rich and numerous. They evidently wished to imitate as well as they could the Temple of Jerusalem, where no wood was used for the roof, except the cedar which Hiram sent to Solomon. For timber to come from the Lebanon as far as Elephantiné would undoubtedly be very expensive. But the Jews would not have considered any other wood, especially not acacia which was used in Egypt for sanctuaries, as worthy to be employed in God's house. The gold and silver vessels deposited in the temple were also an imitation of what existed in the Temple of Jerusalem, which had been carried away several times, first by Shishak, who conquered the country in the time of Rehoboam, and lastly by Nebuchadnezzar.

All the critics declare that the Temple of Elephantiné was built before the law of Deuteronomy, the date of which is the year 621, wherein the unity of the sanctuary is prescribed. This unity of the sanctuary has always been considered as a proof of the late date of Deuteronomy. The question is whether it is really a law and whether there is not a different construction to be put on this so-called command.

As Dr. Orr pointed out, there is already in Exodus an allusion to one sanctuary, xxiii. 17, 19: "Three times in the year all the males shall appear before the Lord God . . . The first of the firstfruits of thy ground thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God." It is obvious that a law of this kind could not very well be enforced in the desert, where there was no definite spot where the worship of God was established and when the people were wandering from place to place. But let us look at the law itself.

It belongs to the last words said to have been spoken by Moses to the people, when they were on the border of Canaan, close to the land where they were to establish themselves after their long desert journey. It is quite natural that there should be some change in the tone of Moses, who at that moment had a more distinct view of what the Israelites would have to do in Canaan, when they would be settled in the promised land instead of being nomads living under tents for years.

In reference to the unity of the sanctuary, we read this (Deut. xii. 5): "Unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall you seek, and thither thou shalt come, and thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand. . . . Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes: for ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth thee. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God causeth you to inherit, and He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; then it shall come to pass that the place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there, thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand . . . take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: but in the place that the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee."

Deuteronomy is supposed to be the law which, according to the critics, never was decreed by Moses. It is a

work of the time of Josiah or of Manasseh. For some, more respectful to the sacred text, it is the work of a pious reformer grieved by the idolatry of the time of Manasseh, who dared not bring it forward himself but who hid it in the temple where it was found by Hilkiah. Others do not hesitate to call it a forgery due to Hilkiah or to the party of the priests, who by the artifice of the discovery of the law of Moses succeeded in bringing the king to their side. This law about the unity of sanctuary under this peculiar form had a sufficient authority to be considered as an absolute prohibition of raising a temple at any other place than Jerusalem. Here only God was to be worshipped. Here only burnt offerings were to be brought to the Lord.

It is certainly very strange if this law is a plagiarism of the language of Moses, if it is a positive veto against the erection of a house of God anywhere else than at Jerusalem, that the law should have been put in that form. It is not a command. It differs entirely from what is enacted as binding the Israelites for ever, such as : " Thou shalt have no other God but Me." Here we find nothing of the kind. Take heed, προσεχε σεαυτῷ, pay attention. It is a recommendation rather than a command, and there is no penal sanction, no threat of a terrible punishment attached to its violation. The command is only in the last words : there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all I command thee.

Moses had no definite idea of what would take place after he had left the Israelites, when they would be in that good land wherein he was not allowed to set his foot. He only supposes that there will be a place " which the Lord shall choose in one of the tribes." He feels certain that in the land " which the Lord your God causeth " the Israelites " to inherit," . . . where they will live in safety, there will be a place set apart as the habitation of the

Lord; but he has no idea of what it will be; he does not think of a house of cedar, of a magnificent and costly temple; he has before his eyes only the Tabernacle and the Ark, for which he wants a fixed abode, a place of rest.

As we said before, no place was set apart until the time of Solomon, when the magnificent house of God was dedicated, when it was offered to the Lord in the ceremony described in the eighth and ninth chapters of the First Book of Kings, when the priests "took up the ark, and they brought the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord unto its place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place." If the law of the unity of the sanctuary such as it is drawn up in Deuteronomy did not exist, surely this was the occasion upon which to enact it, and even to proclaim it aloud before the people. This would have been the most powerful means of establishing for ever that Jerusalem and its temple was the place which the Lord had chosen among the tribes. If nothing of the kind was done at that moment, when this law was the necessary consequence of the building of the temple, it seems to prove that the law already existed and was well known among the people.

Let us now consider the date—621 B.C.—which the critics speak of as well established; and the interpretation which they give of the origin of the law of the unique sanctuary. Josiah had just come to the throne, after the reign of Manasseh who had followed a line quite contrary to that of his father Hezekiah and who had wiped away all traces of the partial reform attempted by Hezekiah. Josiah was quite young when he succeeded his father, and the high priest Hilkiah, with his party, saw that it was a favourable occasion to attempt a great reform in which they would have the upper hand. It was necessary that this reform should originate with the king, and therefore they invented the story that a copy of the law had been

found in the temple ; they read it to the king, who was so strongly impressed that he rent his clothes and forthwith set this great reform in motion. The cornerstone of this reform was, according to the critics, the unity of the sanctuary commanded by the words of Deuteronomy, the book said to have been found in the temple and attributed to Moses in order to give it greater authority.

One of the favourite arguments of the critics is the argument "*a silentio.*" A law does not exist, because it is not observed. This is a quite conventional reasoning and contrary to what we see every day. Every civilized country has in its legislative armoury a certain number of laws which are never observed ; they have fallen into disuse ; they are no longer in keeping with the time. The older they are the more completely are they forgotten. Occasionally one of them may be revived and reappear in its somewhat antiquated form. This may have happened at the time of Hilkiah. The reformers may have revived the words of Moses, they may have quoted his very words as they were written down in Deuteronomy, his last book, and this would explain the strange form of the law of unity and its referring to circumstances quite different from those of Josiah's reign. If Hilkiah had invented the words of Moses, he would not have given them such an inadequate form. They would have been a command. A text on which a deep and far-reaching reform is based, must be positive and clear, its interpretation must not be open to any doubt. Here, according to the critics, what is for them a law invented by the priest and prohibiting absolutely the construction of a temple and the celebration of the worship outside of Jerusalem, is a text which does not mention Jerusalem or any definite place, and in which the idea of a temple does not appear and seems totally strange to the author !

Even if we admit that this is the veto to which the critics attach such great importance, the building of the temple at Elephantiné is no argument for asserting its non-existence at that time, for it was not binding for the Jews settled in Egypt. The colonists at Elephantiné, if they knew it, had no reason to think that it prevented them from building a house to their God Yaho. In certain respects their condition was similar to that of their ancestors in the desert. " Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes : for ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth thee. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God causeth you to inherit, and He giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye shall dwell in safety ; then it shall come to pass. . . ." Undoubtedly the Jews at Elephantiné were not dwelling " over Jordan," they had not as yet come to their rest and their inheritance, and they might justly consider themselves as being allowed to do " whatsoever was right in their eyes." It is interesting to see that one of the first things they thought of when they were in the Egyptian settlement, in a strange land, was to build a temple to their national God. In this respect they differed completely from their countrymen of the Captivity, who never wished to build a temple in their new home, though men like Ezra and Nehemiah were powerful enough at the court of the Persian Kings to have obtained from these rulers permission to have a national sanctuary. But they were captives, brought out by force from their native land, and they always hoped that their stay in Mesopotamia would be only temporary. On the contrary, the Jews in Egypt never considered themselves as exiles, they went to Egypt of their own freewill.

Another proof that the colonists would not have considered themselves as bound by the so-called Deuteronomic prohibition, is that long after the year 621—about the year 154 B.C., in the reign of Ptolemy Philometor—the high priest Onias, who had fled before Antiochus Eupator, built the Temple of Onion at the place now called Tel-el-Yahudieh, in the Delta. Not only had Deuteronomy existed at that time, even according to the critics, for more than 450 years, but the Jews in Egypt had also its Greek translation by the LXX. These various facts are sufficient to show that the construction of the temple at Elephantiné does not prove anything as to the late date assigned by the critics to Deuteronomy.

Another statement of first-rate importance, which the colonists make in their request, is that since the destruction of their temple, they can no longer hold their services; they cannot fulfil their ceremonies, which consist in meal offerings, incense and burnt offerings. Therefore they entreat Bagoas to write a letter allowing them to reconstruct their sanctuary as it was before, and "on the altar of the God Yaho they will offer in His name meal offerings, incense and burnt offerings."

It is impossible to read twice of these rites, by which they sum up their worship, without being struck by the fact that they are exactly those prescribed by the two first chapters of Leviticus, a book entirely assigned by the critics to the Priestly Code. In Leviticus these rites are described at great length and with minute detail. Here again there is no mention of any temple, only of the altar before the tent of meeting. And these rites are said to be a law decreed during the fifth century with the authority of the King of Persia, to regulate the worship of the temple newly rebuilt at Jerusalem!

This is what we find in Leviticus (ii.): "When any

one offereth an oblation of a meal offering unto the Lord, his oblation shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it and put frankincense thereon. And also (id. 14) if thou offer a meal offering of firstfruits unto the Lord, thou shalt offer . . . bruised corn of the fresh ear. And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon: it is a meal offering." Frankincense is the accompaniment of meal offering. As for the burnt offerings (i.), what is to be done is prescribed in case it should be an offering of the herd, a bullock, or an oblation of the herd of the sheep, or a burnt offering of fowls. Leviticus lays down a very precise ritual in that respect.

Is not the coincidence of the Aramaic text with this chapter very striking? For the text of the letter implies that this definite kind of worship went back also to the time of the kings of Egypt. Temple and ritual were *one* thing which they had lost, and which they asked should be restored. They had brought that peculiar form of worship when they came from Palestine to settle in Egypt, and when they wished to build a temple to Yaho, it was to perform before Him those ceremonies which were characteristic of His worship, and were regulated by the old laws of Moses. They entreat the governor to let them revive their old traditions, to allow them to live the religious life to which they are attached because it had been that of their fathers. They would not have spoken in the same tone if their worship had been a foreign importation coming from Persia, and established not long before in the temple at Jerusalem.

Some of the critics admit that the Priestly Code containing the law was written by Ezra and that it was solemnly proclaimed to the people of Jerusalem by Nehemiah in the year 445. If this was so, the law must have taken some time to reach Egypt, and in that case when the

temple at Elephantiné was destroyed the worship with a Levitical form was a quite recent institution. These colonists would not feel for that new ritual, which they had not known in their own country, which did not come from their fathers, the strong attachment which they express in such a touching way in their letter. For since it had ceased, owing to the destruction of the temple, "they wear mourning clothes and fast, their women are like widows, they do not anoint themselves with oil, and they drink no wine." They care not to separate the building itself from the worship of Yaho; for them, both belong to the same tradition, they appeal to the same recollections.

"In Thy name they will bring meal offerings, incense and burnt offerings to the altar of the God Yaho." A curious commentary upon this sentence may be found in the Book of Ezra (iii. 2), where we read of the Jews when they first went back to Jerusalem under the leadership of Zerubbabel: "They builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. And they set the altar upon its base . . . and they offered burnt offerings morning and evening." For the Jews at Jerusalem, as well as for those at Elephantiné, the central part of the worship consists in the burnt offerings on the altar. It is important to notice these words in Ezra: "as it is written in the law of Moses." At that time, when the Jews were allowed by Cyrus to rebuild their temple—in the year 537-6—there was no "Priestly Code" as yet; it was seventy or eighty years earlier than the supposed composition of that code; still Moses is quoted as being the author of the law to which they conformed. And this law was not a tradition; it was "written," this word occurs again (iii. 4), about the feast of the Tabernacles. "And they kept the feast of Tabernacles, as it is written." So the books

or rather the tablets, had been preserved; perhaps carried away from Jerusalem with the precious objects of the temple, and restored by Mithredath the treasurer (Ezra i. 8).

Some of the critics admit that the ceremonies mentioned in the letter, for instance, the burnt offerings, go back to a high antiquity; they were forms which had crept into the worship of the temple and in that way had become inveterate customs deeply rooted in the religious habits of the people. According to this theory, the Priestly Code, being most traditional and conservative in its character, would have merely codified, and regulated in their details, ceremonies which existed long before. This theory does not explain anything as to the beginning of the ceremonies; it supposes a kind of spontaneous origin during the centuries of the existence of the temple. Besides, we can make the same objection here as we have done in the case of the supposed prohibition of Deuteronomy. This codification of old customs is made in view of the new temple, built after the Captivity; it will have to be solemnly proclaimed to the people in a feast which is a faint rehearsal of the dedication of the temple by Solomon. One may well ask here the same question as before. When Solomon had completed the building, when he solemnly declared that it would be devoted to the worship of Yaho, how is it that at that unique moment nothing was done to regulate the worship? If there were not as yet fixed laws as to the offerings and as to the place to which they were to be brought, was, here again, "every man to do whatsover was right in his own eyes?" This seems to be the occasion when the laws about the worship would naturally be codified, and their observation enforced. Since nothing is said about the ceremonies to be celebrated in the future

and the way in which they were to be performed, we must admit that the necessary regulations existed already. This seems to be implied in the words spoken by the Lord to Solomon (1 Kings ix. 5) . . . If thou wilt walk before Me as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep My statutes, and My judgments: then I will establish the throne of the kingdom over Israel for ever . . . but if ye shall turn away from following Me, ye or your children, and not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but shall go and serve other gods, and worship them, then . . ." Commandments, statutes, judgments are the words designating the law given to Israel by the Lord. In this law the moral side and the ceremonial are so intimately connected, that it is hardly possible to dissociate them. Take, for instance, what is said of the offerings and sacrifices in the first chapter of Leviticus. There the ceremony is merely the outcome of the moral and spiritual side of religion—Solomon could not have one without the other. If he had the moral commandments and statutes, he certainly had the ritual—the outward acts which corresponded to the moral law and were the visible signs of its existence—especially when he had just built a magnificent edifice intended to be the central point of the worship. Nor would he have the ceremonies without the laws explaining why they were established, by what feeling they were actuated, and when they were to be performed.

The same was the case with the Jews at Elephantiné; they had not inherited from their fathers a senseless ritual, ceremonies void of any meaning. If in the time of the Pharaohs, when they had raised the temple, they presented meal offerings, incense and burnt offerings, they knew why they did so, and for what reason they

had received the command to do so. I cannot help thinking that these few words of the letter, saying that, when the temple will be rebuilt as it was before, "they will bring meal offerings, incense and burnt-offerings," show that when the temple was founded, they already observed the law which is attributed by the critics to a Priestly Code of so much later date.

Besides this letter, there is another document which alludes as clearly as possible to another Mosaic institution—the Passover. It is older than the letter and even than the destruction of the temple; it is of the fifth year of Darius (419 B.C.). Unfortunately it is so fragmentary, that in the reconstitution there must be a great deal of guess work. It is a letter from a man called Hananyah, who informs his countrymen that the king has sent to the satrap, Arsames, a message concerning them. From the fifteenth to the twenty-first of the Babylonian month Nisan, the Abib of Exodus, they have to abstain from leavened bread, which is the distinctive feature of the Passover. It looks as if they had not been able to do it previously. The observance had been perhaps temporarily hindered. I do not believe that this decree of the king is enacted for all the Jews of the Persian Kingdom, as Prof. Eduard Meyer maintains. It seems, on the contrary, that this decree is especially intended for the Jews at Elephantiné. Probably they had been prevented from celebrating the Passover by the Egyptians. The Passover implied the sacrifice of a lamb. We must remember that the ram was the emblem of Chnub, the local god. The ram was thus the sacred animal of the place, and in the way the lamb was sacrified at the Passover there may have been something repugnant to the Egyptian inhabitants. The Jews were obliged to turn to the king and to have his support in

order to be allowed to celebrate their feast according to the old ritual. It is quite possible that the sight of the sacrifice of the Passover may have increased the hatred of the native population against the foreign worship, and may have contributed to the destruction of the temple where a sacrifice took place which they considered a desecration.

Another very striking feature of the letter to Bagoas is that we find in it an echo of the teaching of nearly all the prophets, who constantly repeat to the people that the value of outward ceremonies is only secondary and that what is required of them as of primary importance is that they should follow the commandments of their God. Samuel already gave the people that warning on the solemn occasion of Saul's return from his campaign against the Amalekites (1 Sam. xv. 22): "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." In their letter the Jews entreat Bagoas to say a word which will allow them to rebuild their temple and to restore the worship of their God; and before their God Yaho these acts of kindness will be of greater value than that of the man who "offers burnt-offerings and sacrifices to the amount of a thousand talents of silver." We are here reminded of words in the Book of Proverbs to which these words of the Jews appear like a commentary: "To do justice and judgment is more accepted to the Lord than sacrifice" (Prov. xxi. 3).

Thus we recognize here not only the form but the spirit of the old Mosaic law, and it is not possible to admit that all this is the result of a composition of Ezra, brought from Babylon, and imported into Palestine forty years before. In spite of the shortness of the letter to Bagoas,

we can say that the facts it mentions militate distinctly against the late date of the Priestly Code, and in favour of the Mosaic origin of the law.

The Language

Just as the Tel-el-Amarna tablets were a revelation as regards the language which was written in Palestine at the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, the Elephantiné papyri have given us an equally great surprise in showing us that the language spoken and written by the Hebrews in Egypt was Aramaic. The explanation generally given for this unexpected fact is that the Hebrews had given up their native language, and adopted that of the country of their rulers, the Persians, at the same time keeping their own tongue for religious purposes only.

This explanation does not seem to agree with the facts as we know them from the papyri. In the letter to Bagoas the Jews state clearly that their temple had been built by their fathers at the time of the Egyptian kings. This temple was standing when Cambyses invaded the country, and the Persian conqueror respected it. It was not destroyed, though he did destroy those of the Egyptians. If the temple of the Jews dated from the time of the native Pharaohs, it must have been erected when the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, the Saites, reigned over Egypt, a time when the Israelites flocked to Egypt both as mercenaries and through fear of the Assyrians, when there was no Captivity as yet, and no Persian dominion.

The Israelites of Migdol and Noph brought to Egypt their own language, as would be especially likely since they preserved also their form of worship and their God. If they had changed their language they would have adopted that of the land where they settled rather than Aramaic—the language of a country hostile to the

Egyptians, and with which they had no intercourse. If Aramaic was not their language, brought from Palestine, we must admit that at some given moment there was a complete change. They gave up their native idiom so thoroughly that the new one became the popular language. For we know from the finds at Elephantiné that the usual pieces of writing, the familiar letters, the most trivial notices, for which they used potsherds as we do with scraps of paper, were all written in Aramaic.

If this change took place, is it possible to fix any reason or any date for it? It cannot have been earlier than the establishment of the Persian rule. Why should the Jews have anticipated the new state of things and adapted themselves beforehand to an organization which did not exist? Cambyses did not remain long in Egypt, and if his successors established a Persian administration in the country, that does not mean that they changed the language, nor even that the officials were obliged to write to their ruler in his tongue. It is not so in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets; the subordinates of Amenophis III do not write to him in Egyptian. They use their own idiom and their own script; and if such is the practice of governors writing official documents, much more is it to be expected from men who are the priests of the Temple of Yaho, and who speak not only for themselves, but in the name of the whole population of the place. They would not use a foreign tongue. If the Persians had abolished the religion of the Jews, and compelled them to adopt another one, a change of language would have followed. But, on the contrary, they were very respectful to the worship of Yaho; when they were playing havoc with the Egyptians' sanctuaries they had not touched that of Elephantiné. Language and religion are always intimately connected in the case of these old nations.

It is therefore hardly possible to doubt that the Jews, who came to Egypt in large numbers, at the time of Josiah and probably before, spoke and wrote Aramaic. This was the language which they brought from their country. Aramaic, the language spoken at Jerusalem at the time of our Lord, was known and used in Palestine before the Captivity, before the Hebrews returned from Babylon. This seems to be the conclusion we have to draw from the language of the papyri found at Elephantiné.

In considering a language like Aramaic, we must not be ruled too completely by principles which have prevailed too long in linguistic studies; we have to look more at what takes place at the present day. A language is not encircled by political boundaries. It can spread far beyond the limits of the country where it is supposed to have originated; it may have many dialects, some of which are transitions to the idiom of a neighbouring nation, as we find now with the German spoken in Alsace. Some of the dialects may have been written, and some may be mere speech. It is certainly an error to suppose that a language is the exclusive property of a nation, and that the presence in the same region of two idioms which are not identical, proves the simultaneous presence of different ethnic elements. Also a very important fact, too often disregarded and left aside, is that what is called the language of a nation consists of two or three elements, more or less different: the idiom of the common people, which is generally not written, the literary language, that of books of legal or official documents, and perhaps also, especially in antiquity, that of religion. This is found to be the fact in a reduced degree at the present day in nearly all the countries of Europe, in spite of the uniformity produced by school and education. The colloquial idiom of an English peasant

or a Scotch workman is not that of the newspapers, nor that of the Authorized Version.

Anthropology has long ago dispelled the idea that language and race correspond exactly to each other; language is not always a racial sign, nor even does it usually mark an ethnic difference. Therefore I cannot admit—what is still the base of historical systems, even in recent books—the idea that Aramaic was the language of a nation called the Arameans, and Assyrian the language of Assyria, or that the existence in Assyria of Aramaic documents proves the invasion of Mesopotamia by Arameans who at last became predominant, since their language was the only one in use.

Babylonian or Assyrian and Aramaic have existed together in the same nation. They are parallel idioms. I believe we have positive proofs of this assertion. Here I must revert to the fact upon which I insisted in the first chapter, and the importance of which cannot be underrated. Babylonian and Assyrian are always written in cuneiform. No Assyrian document is found in any other script. On the other hand cuneiform can only be pressed on wet clay. It cannot be written on any soft material like paper or skin. Cuneiform, therefore, was not sufficient for the requirements of common life, and it was absolutely necessary to have another script, which was Aramaic. We have positive proofs of this.

Aramaic has been spoken by different nations, and is not the property of the inhabitants of one definite country. The name Aramean may have been applied to a man or a people who spoke Aramaic, just as in our time in a French-speaking country one would call "un Allemand" any one who speaks German, whether he be Swiss, Austrian, or German. It seems that Aram in the Old Testament is a name similar to that of the Anu in the Egyptian inscrip-

tions. Just as there are various kinds of Anu, there are also several Aram: Aram-Naharaim is most frequently met with, and translated by the LXX Mesopotamia, Aram Zobah and of Beth-rehob (2 Sam. x. 6) and others are also found. We must consider Aram as standing for an ethnic group—the most important one of the old Semitic branch—and we must not forget that the Hebrews considered themselves to be Arameans.

We have positive proofs that Assyrian or Babylonian and Aramaic existed at the same time, in the same country, parallel to each other. The simultaneous presence of the two languages has been explained by the fact that the Arameans had invaded Mesopotamia, and that although their political power had been broken, they had succeeded in acquiring a great influence in the land, especially in the economic life of the nation. They concentrated the commerce in their hands, so that their language was not only used for trade, but became in the ninth century B.C. the diplomatic language of Western Asia, as Babylonian cuneiform had been in the fifteenth. Aramaic became so necessary and so useful, that possibly an Aramaic chancery was established by the side of the Assyrian. In contracts Aramean officials appear as witnesses, and King Esarhaddon prays his god Shamash for the happiness of his Assyrian and his Aramaic writers.

The character of the bilingual documents seems to exclude the idea that the two languages belonged to two different peoples.

Let us consider once more what cuneiform is. It is not a writing; it is an impression which can be produced only on wet clay. It is used for religion, for law, for contracts, for letters to be carried abroad, for treaties, for historical records, for any document which must be abiding. This alphabet marks a language which differed

from the colloquial idiom ; as in our time that of a judge or a clergyman differs from the speech of the man in the street. It was not popular ; it could be read only by men having a certain education and training, priests or professional writers.

Being suited for one material only, this method of writing was absolutely inappropriate for trade and for the requirements of ordinary life, when it was necessary to write on paper, skin, potsherds, wood, or anything which was at hand. It was absolutely necessary to have another, and I have no hesitation in saying that that other was Aramaic.

Among the Assyrian sculptures have been found scenes representing scribes writing down the number of the slain. They have long rolls which may be either papyrus or skin—some flexible material—and they inscribe on these rolls the number of heads brought to them, a mode of reckoning the losses of the enemy which was still in use in some eastern countries not very long ago. Certainly these scribes do not write cuneiform ; they must have used a script suitable to the material which they unrolled.

As proof that what these scribes wrote was really Aramaic, we can bring forward the exceedingly interesting bilingual documents. Amongst the first discovered were the bronze weights in the form of lions, belonging to the end of the eighth century. They have Assyrian cuneiform and Aramaic inscriptions. The Assyrian gives the date of the object, and the name of the king. This is the official part, the royal mark of the weight, but its height, the number of units it represented, is given in Aramaic, and the Aramaic does not contain anything else. Aramaic was thus the popular script, that which the tradespeople could read. What they cared for was the quantity, the weight expressed. This is what they wanted, and not

the royal name. Just so in our time, the shopkeeper reads on his weight the number of pounds it is worth, and not the armorial bearings of the State, or the official mark, whatever it is, indicating that the weight is correct.

Still more convincing are the Assyrian tablets with Aramaic dockets written on the side. These tablets are generally contracts—the most popular kind of cuneiform documents—and these dockets give in Aramaic the names of the people concerned, and also a short summary of what the tablet contains. One of the most ancient is of the time of Sennacherib (687 B.C.). It gives the name of the vendor who owns three shops. The docket is for the people who could not read the official cuneiform. It is in the language and script which they used every day.

Here we again have a proof of the simultaneous existence of two forms of the language, just as we find even now in civilized countries. The language of religion, of law, and of all important documents is not that of the people; there may be a great amount of local differences, the idiom of the people may change, it may evolve, while the official language keeps for much longer its original form. In this case there is also the difference of script for cuneiform could never be popular. This tablet shows that already in Sennacherib's time the popular language and the popular script was Aramaic, while everything official or legal was written in Assyrian cuneiform, as were also religious or literary compositions which had to be preserved.

Languages are not limited by political frontiers, especially when these frontiers may change through conquests or invasions. There are languages which spread in the neighbourhood, and enlarge the area which they occupy; at the same time they drive away languages belonging to nations less numerous and less powerful, so

that at last the latter may be restricted to a small area and become extinct. There is an example of this in Switzerland. There a language special to one of the cantons, with a literature—the Romanche of the canton Grisons—is diminishing rapidly, and although efforts are made to keep it up, it will soon disappear and be swamped by German, which is spoken by the majority of the population of Switzerland. In the same way we may imagine Aramaic, which was spoken by a large and warlike population, gaining ground over Hebrew and spreading rapidly in Palestine by conquest or by commercial intercourse. This would be the more easily the case, since the Hebrews belonged to the same ethnographic group as the Assyrians, for they considered themselves Arameans. No wonder then that Aramaic should have spread to some parts of Palestine, and that it was brought to Egypt by the Hebrews who settled there.

The Hebrews understood Aramaic, and the Assyrians could speak the language of the Jews. There is only a difference of dialect between the two. In this respect there is a most instructive passage on the occasion of the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians (2 Kings xviii. 26; cf. Is. xxxvi. 11). When Rabshakeh comes near the walls of the city and meets the messengers of Hezekiah, to whom he brings his master's threats, the three officers say to him: "Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Aramean language; for we understand it: and speak not with us in the Jew's language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall." Rabshakeh met this request with the utmost contempt: "Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jew's language . . ." His words have even that coarseness which appeals to the lowest; he used such words purposely because he did not come to speak to the king, or to make an arrangement

with him about his submission to the Assyrian conqueror ; on the contrary, he wished to induce Hezekiah's men to abandon him, he promised them peace until they should be transported to a country better than their own.

In order to be understood it was necessary that he should speak the language of the people, not that of the educated, but of the common soldier, of the man who had left his field for the defence of Jerusalem. Aramaic in the time of Sennacherib was the language of the trade, and probably of the national intercourse, of the numerous and powerful Mesopotamians with their weaker neighbours. Therefore the people who had a certain education in Palestine knew it and very likely could write it. Men like Eliakim, who was over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the recorder, were instructed in Aramaic and perhaps made great use of it ; for the men of the people, Aramaic was " another tongue," in so far as the popular dialect is different from a written and literary language, just as French differs from the patois which were, or perhaps are still, spoken in some remote parts of France, or German from the dialects of the various cantons of Switzerland. It is not many years since one could meet in Savoy, a French-speaking country, people who spoke only patois and could not understand French ; the same was true with German in some remote valleys of the Alps. In both cases we have present side by side idioms belonging to the same family, to the same linguistic group, but sufficiently separated to sound like something unknown to the uneducated. Jewish (*Ἰουδαιστί*) and Aramaic were in this relation to each other. Jewish is here the language spoken to the people on the wall.

In the other passage where " Jewish " is mentioned, it is put in the same rank as the dialects spoken at a short distance. This is in Nehemiah xiii. 23 : " In

those days also saw I Jews that had married women of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab, and their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod (Ἀζωτιστι) and could not speak in the Jew's language (Ἰουδαϊστί), but according to the language of each people." Ashdod was a city of the Philistines near the sea, both Ammon and Moab were on the east of the Jordan, so that, according to the passage, east and west of Judea were spoken so-called "languages" which were not Jewish. Ammon had not the same as Moab, each people had its own, so that the country was divided amongst many local dialects, one of which was Jewish; and in these two passages, the only ones in the Old Testament where Jewish is mentioned, it clearly means the dialect spoken in Judea.

Hezekiah the King, like the men of his household, could read Aramaic. When Sennacherib, upon receiving threatening reports about Egypt, was obliged to raise the siege of Lachish and to march against Libnah, he sent a letter to Hezekiah. This letter from a camp must have been written by one of those scribes such as are represented as counting the trophies on a battlefield and writing on a roll of papyrus or skin; it could not be cuneiform. It was Aramaic, the common language of Sennacherib's time, as we know from the tablets. It seems probable that the letter was a roll. After Hezekiah had read it, "he went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord." The word of the LXX ἀνέπτυξεν is to be translated "unrolled it," Vulg. *expandit*. This shows clearly that it was not a tablet. If, on the contrary, the King of Assyria had sent to Hezekiah a treaty of peace, an important document which had to be preserved, and to be put in the archives, it would have been a tablet written in cuneiform.

By Hezekiah's time Aramaic had already spread in

Palestine, certainly among the educated, as we see from this narrative, and it must have gained much ground through the invasion of the Assyrians, owing much of its spread to trade and to the influence which a great empire is sure to exert over a small and weak country fast tending towards disruption. Therefore we cannot but admit that the Jews who settled in Egypt brought Aramaic with them, it was the language which they wrote already in their native country; and not only was it the written language, the literary idiom, but it was also used in every-day life, since the *ostraca* are also written in Aramaic.

Hebrew is not the language of the colonists at Elephantiné. The learned editor of the papyri, Professor Sachau, after speaking of Aramaic, which does not differ from Hebrew more than a German dialect from another, adds these significant words: "With the keenest interest I have searched every bit, every fragment, from Elephantiné in the hope of finding something Hebrew, but in vain. The Jewish colony at Elephantiné had Hebrew names, but everything written was in Aramaic. For me also this fact was surprising." Then Professor Sachau describes the growth of Aramaic, which in his opinion appeared under the Sargonide Dynasty, and which increased in such a way that at Christ's time all the Semites north of Arabia, and Christ Himself, spoke Aramaic.

Not only did the colonists write and speak Aramaic, but they never used the Canaanite writing, which seems to have been for them "another tongue." There have been found at Elephantiné a certain number of Phœnician inscriptions; they are generally on amphoras, either on the belly or on the handle, and contain a proper name distinctly Phœnician, with an indication of the measure. To what these names refer it is difficult to say. Professor Sachau inclines to think that they are the names of the

potters who had at the same time to control the measure. In that case one would expect to find the same name occurring repeatedly among these inscriptions, because one can hardly suppose that there were so many Phœnician potters at Elephantiné.

It seems more natural to attribute the presence of these vases and these inscriptions, as Professor Eduard Meyer does to the wine trade between Phœnicia and Egypt, of which we know from this statement of Herodotus : " Twice a year wine is brought into Egypt from every part of Greece, as well as from Phœnicia, in earthen jars." The wine and oil which filled the cellar of Omri of Samarai came perhaps also from Phœnicia, and therefore the *ostraca* found there were in that script. Whatever may be the origin of these inscriptions at Elephantiné, one thing seems certain : for the Jews at Elephantiné, the Canaanite script, always considered as their own and in which all their books are generally supposed to have been written, was something alien and used only by strangers.

The Jews at Elephantiné had a temple where they celebrated the Passover, and where they made sacrifices as prescribed in Leviticus. A question naturally arises here : Did they have the book of the law ? Here again we cannot express more than a conjecture. It is possible that they had Deuteronomy, that part of the law of Moses revived by King Josiah, and read in the language of the day to the assembled people. The book could not be in cuneiform tablets, which the Jews ignored even more than the mass of the Arameans, it must have been in the popular form and language in Mesopotamia, Aramaic, the more so since it was written on papyrus. The transition from the cuneiform to Aramaic we have seen in the bilingual tablets.

CHAPTER VI

ARAMAIC

Ezra

EZRA undoubtedly played an important part in all matters connected with the law. As we read in his book (vii. 6), " he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses which the Lord the God of Israel had given." Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments (*id.* 10). He seems to have found extraordinary favour with the King Artaxerxes, since in the seventh year of his reign the king issued a decree allowing Ezra to go to Jerusalem with a certain number of his countrymen, and providing him with all that was necessary for the worship, especially for sacrifices, and giving him a right " to appoint magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye him that knoweth them not " (vii. 25).

This was the second return from the Captivity, which took place in the year 458, nearly sixty years after the dedication of the temple under Darius in 516. On his arrival, Ezra found that the inhabitants of Jerusalem had broken the commandments of the law of Moses (Ezra ix.), that " the priests and the Levites had not separated themselves from the people of the land, doing according to their abominations. . . ." For, to quote his

words, " they had taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the land : yea the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass." Ezra describes the shock which he received on hearing from the princes what the state of things was, so that " he sat astonied until the evening oblation." We have his prayer and his confession, which impressed the people so strongly that they gathered together unto him and made a covenant with God to put away all their wives, and such as were born of them that it should be done according to the law. A certain number of priests with elders and judges were appointed, before whom all who had married strange wives were to appear so that they might be separated from their wives, and that they might give their hand that they would put their wives away.

Here Ezra's narrative breaks off. Certainly it would be surprising, if, as according to the critics he did, he came to Jerusalem to effect a reformation based on laws which he had himself written under the name of Moses, that he should be so completely upset upon seeing that these laws had been violated. His language to the people would not have been understood. When he prays for them, he appeals to facts they knew and had known for generations, and his feelings are re-echoed by his hearers who assemble in great number, confessing their guilt. There is no opposition against Ezra's condemnation of their conduct : on the contrary, on hearing his words, they declare at once that they are quite willing to act in accordance with God's commandments and to dismiss their strange wives with their children. Would they have felt guilty at once, if the recollection of the old Mosaic law had not been suddenly revived in their minds so strongly that they dared not go against it, but submitted at once to its dictates,

though to do so must have been a hardship for some of them.

We hear no more of Ezra for thirteen years. Probably he returned to Mesopotamia, and during his absence from Jerusalem the Jews seem to have been " in great affliction and reproach " ; the walls were broken down, and the gates burnt with fire. What happened at that time we hear from Nehemiah. He, hearing the history of the people at Jerusalem, says in his prayer (Neh. i. 7) : " We have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments which Thou commandedst Thy servant Moses." For him also, the law which has been broken is the law of God given by Moses.

When Nehemiah had rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, he celebrated the feast of Tabernacles (Neh. viii.), and, to make it more solemn, the people " spoke unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation . . . and he read therein . . . from early morning till midday. . . . And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people . . . and when he had opened it, all the people stood up."

From these passages, we gather that the people wished to hear the law of Moses, the command which the great prophet had received from the Lord. For them, the law was the words of the great legislator. This law was in a book which had to be opened, probably a roll of papyrus or skin, therefore it was not a text written on a tablet in cuneiform. This is an important point to note.

But more important still is that which we read next (v. 7) : " The Levites caused the people to understand . . . and they read in the book, in the law of God distinctly," or, as the margin says, " with an interpretation," " and they gave the sense, so that they understood the

reading," or, "and caused them to understand." This seems to show clearly that the law was not written in the language spoken by the hearers. "So that they understood the reading" cannot mean that they spoke loudly enough or distinctly enough to be heard. It is clear that, when an assembly wants to listen to the reading of the law, those chosen to read it would be those who have a good voice, reaching far enough. We may compare the Levite who acted on that occasion to the Mohammedan priest, to the muezzin who call to prayer from the minarets, or to the imâms who read the Koran in the mosques.

The law itself was sufficiently simple and clear. There was nothing intricate or mysterious in its decrees, it did not require an extraordinary intelligence, or an initiation of any kind, so that these words of the margin, "they read with an interpretation," and the following sentence, "and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading," cannot in my opinion mean anything else than this: They put it in the popular language, so that the people could understand. It is not properly a translation, since we have here only a difference of dialect. It is exactly as if in our times a German-speaking clergyman were to explain Luther's Bible in one of the dialects of Germany or Switzerland.

We have seen before that the language of the inhabitants of Jerusalem is called Jewish: it had already that name in the time of Hezekiah. Biblical scholars have generally considered that this "Jewish" meant Hebrew, the Hebrew of Scripture. Then the law was not written in Jewish, or the hearers would not have needed any explanation. In my opinion, to which we shall revert further, it was written in Aramaic, the popular form, the book form of cuneiform, and these passages seem to confirm what was suggested before: that Jewish was a

spoken idiom, the dialect of Jerusalem and Judea, but not a written language.

On the twenty and fourth day of the seventh month, the Jews celebrated a feast of humiliation and made a covenant and wrote it, that they should keep the law and serve the Lord. The prayer which precedes it is a short summary of the history of the Israelites. There is mentioned this most important fact: "Thou madest known unto them Thy holy sabbaths, and commandest them commandments and statutes and a law, by the hand of Moses Thy servant" (Neh. ix. 14). Once more (xiii. 1) Nehemiah quotes the book of Moses, in which was written the prohibition that no Ammonite or Moabite should enter the assembly of God. The law is everywhere attributed to Moses, and if, according to the critics, it is not the work of the great lawgiver, every mention of his name is a deliberate falsehood. In the mouth of Ezra, who is said by some critics to be the author of the Priestly Code, which contains the greater part of the ceremonial law, it is the fraud of a conscious forger.

"Ezra was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given (Ezra vii. 3); he had set his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (*id.* 10). Besides, Artaxerxes speaks of "the law of thy God which is in thine hand" (*id.* 15). Shall we take these passages as meaning that Ezra wrote the law which fills the greatest part of the four last books of the Pentateuch. In that case, when he speaks of the law of God given by Moses, he is guilty of a plain deception. He may have consulted the works of the Elohist and the Jahvist, those two supposed writers who both wrote books about the history of Israel, the length and purpose of which are absolutely unknown to us: perhaps he recorded and codified old customs which, according to

some critics, had crept into the service of the temple; but, anyhow, the greatest part of the law is his work; the name of Moses is there merely to deceive his hearers and to give to his words the necessary authority. In fact, the critics, both in the case of Ezra and in that of Deuteronomy, want us to believe that his work is nothing but forgery. Even if it is not Ezra who is guilty of this deceit, it is the anonymous and unknown author of the Priestly Code, so that the imposture is the same.

One thing is rather astonishing. If Ezra wished to come forward before his countrymen as a God-sent legislator, why did he not appear as a prophet? Why did he not say, like Isaiah or Jeremiah: "Thus saith the Lord"? Instead of that, he is a scribe who appeals to old traditions, and who constantly hides himself behind the person of Moses. But certainly in his time the name of Moses must have had very little weight with his countrymen. What could they know about him? If we adopt the theories of the critics, he had not written anything, the records of the birth of the people of Israel were not due to him, they were a narrative by two different and recent writers living at an interval of more than a century: the same authors had related only part of the events of the Exodus and the life in the desert. Deuteronomy, a document of the sixth century, which contained part of the laws, had been the cause of an ephemeral reform which had had no morrow. As for the bulk of the ceremonial laws, it did not yet exist. What kind of prestige, of authority, could the name and the work of Moses have had for them since he was but a man first named in a document of the ninth century? Ezra's appeal could be listened to only if he reminded them of laws which his countrymen knew and of which the authority had been recognized by generations. If the documents about the history of Israel are not what they

are said to be, the long prayer pronounced by the Jews on the day of humiliation (Neh. ix.), especially the first half of it, must have been quite new language to most of the hearers. The whole narrative in this prayer, from the choice of Abram to the conquest of Canaan, must have been another forgery like that of the law.

Taking the text of Scripture as we read it, Ezra must have been a man learned for his time, who was occupied with the study of the law. That probably means that he was chiefly occupied with the Pentateuch, with the books of Moses. The Jewish traditions attribute to him all kinds of works, some of them quite impossible ; two of the most important are the settling of the canon of Scripture, and the introduction of the Aramaic character. Various scholars have considered that that Aramaic must have been the square Hebrew, which is a derivative, not from the Phoenician, or Canaanite, but from Aramaic. But, considering the circumstances in which Ezra lived, the fact that for many years he inhabited Mesopotamia, where Aramaic was the written language, that he spoke Aramaic with the king, that the laws of the King of Persia and the letter which Artaxerxes gave him were in Aramaic, that the requests addressed to the king " were written in the Aramaic character, and set forth in the Aramaic tongue " (Ezra iv. 8), it seems natural to conclude that the Aramaic which he adopted was not the square Hebrew, but Aramaic proper. That he knew Aramaic, that he could speak and write it, is beyond dispute ; his book is a proof of it, for several chapters are written in that language.

Even if we admit that Old Hebrew was a script and an idiom for books, we do not see how Ezra could pass from the Canaanite alphabet to square Hebrew, which is a modified form of Aramaic, without having first passed

through the stage of Mesopotamian Aramaic, the script of the bilingual tablets and of the papyri. If square Hebrew were derived from Canaanite, one would understand the change easily; but it is not. The square Hebrew letters are modifications of Aramaic; those who invented those characters must have used first the original type from which they shaped their new letters.

Ezra was a scribe, a learned man. In Mesopotamia, that means a man who could read the two writings in use in the land: the Aramaic, the popular language, the script of trade written on papyrus or skin, and the cuneiform, used for religious and legal documents, and engraved on clay tablets. We should therefore say that the chief work of Ezra was to do what the Assyrian scribes did for contracts, to turn into Aramaic the cuneiform tablets of the law of Moses. The law was in his hand, so says the king, so he must have seen and have been able to study these tablets. How did they come to Babylon? We do not know; perhaps with the contents and furniture of the temple, with the vessels and the gold and silver carried away by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra v. 14), and which had been kept apart.

Ezra, we suppose, made a book with the cuneiform tablets written by Moses, he arranged them in order, put them each in its proper place, so as to make a running and continuous text. In this respect he must have found a difference between the tablets, between the ones which referred to the events previous to the arrival of the Hebrews in Egypt and the later ones. The first must have been brought from Mesopotamia by Abram when he settled in Canaan; those relating to Arbraham's and Isaac's life, we may suppose, were brought to Egypt with Jacob and his family. These tablets were not only part of the genealogy of Jacob, they were also the title-deeds of

the covenant made by the Lord with the family of Jacob ; they were Jacob's and his family's patent of nobility. It is well known what a great value the Eastern nations attach to genealogy, which they preserve religiously, even for their horses. In remote antiquity, genealogies were the only records of events ; there was no other history than such family records. But these yearly tablets though rewritten by Moses, had no literary connexion, they were not a book, and that is, as we saw, what gives to the first part of Genesis the character of an aggregate of separate pieces put side by side.

It was quite different with the tablets written to tell the story of what had happened since Jacob settled in Egypt. There Moses had a clear and distinct tradition ; he could see the body of the man who had played the most important part in that history. He could write a running narrative, a series of tablets, like several which have been preserved, where the connexion from one to the other is indicated by the last word, or by the last sentence of one tablet being repeated on the next. That is the reason why we cannot trace the tablets in Exodus or the following books as easily as in the beginning of Genesis.

Ezra thus made a book out of the writings of Moses, he wrote them out on a roll of papyrus or probably of skin. This book the Jews asked Ezra to bring before the congregation (Neh. viii. 1) : " And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people ; and when he had opened it, all the people stood up " (*id.* 5). This shows that he did not read from tablets, and, since a roll could not be written in cuneiform, it could only be Aramaic. Ezra did for the law of Moses what many Mesopotamian scribes must have often done for their religious or legal documents. He merely followed the practice of the country which he inhabited, and wherein he was probably born. In this

conception of his work there is nothing which is not in accordance with the customs of the time. That Ezra wrote in Aramaic, we can see also from some of the chapters of his book.

We must admire the way he arranged the tablets of Moses, especially those of Genesis, which are the most ancient and not connected together as the later are. He was evidently himself imbued with the idea which is the leading principle of the whole book. The purport of Genesis is to show how all events converged towards the choice of Israel as the elect, and this idea Ezra certainly cherished, and it guided him in his work. As we saw before, the order adopted may not have been strictly chronological. History or chronology, in the modern sense, were not his aim. He had a higher task: he had to repeat the work of Moses in showing to his countrymen that they were God's people on condition that they should keep His laws and commandments and not go after other gods.

Another point is here of the greatest importance in regard to the assertions of the critics. Ezra wrote in Aramaic. Then, if he is the author of the Priestly Code, the work most often considered as the groundwork of the Pentateuch, this document was in Aramaic. Therefore, like the supposed work of the Elohist and the Jahvist, we have not got it in its original language, and the dissection of the book has been practised on a text in a different script and in a different idiom from that in which it was originally composed. Textual criticism is here as much out of place as with the other parts of Genesis; the very basis of the theory fails here as before.

Even if it were not Ezra who wrote the Priestly Code, but some unknown Jew of post-exilian time, since his writing comes from Mesopotamia these religious laws,

supported by the king of Persia's authority and taught to the people at the same time as the political laws of the kingdom, could hardly have been in any other language than Aramaic. Besides, if they had been in another idiom, they would not have been understood nor have been binding for Jews who, like those at Elephantiné, spoke and wrote Aramaic. One cannot conceive the Priestly Code otherwise than in Aramaic. Therefore we do not read it to-day in its original language.

The books of the law put by Ezra into Aramaic must have been those which the priests used at Jerusalem, the more so since Aramaic seems to have spread more and more in the country, so as to become the language of the people at the time of our Lord. Certainly, two hundred years after Ezra, Aramaic must have been more deeply rooted among the inhabitants of Judea than when he came over from Mesopotamia. Therefore, when the king of Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus, asked for the books of the Jews to translate them and to add them to his library, the thin films, which Josephus describes as covered with gold characters, were written upon in Aramaic. This seems to be confirmed by what the same author says (*Antiq. Jud.* xv. 11. 1) that the characters of the books of the Jews were similar to those of the Syrians, and that their language sounded alike, but that it was of a peculiar kind. Some of the translators have understood this sentence as meaning that these books were in a language distinct from the Syrian, but I cannot agree with this interpretation. These words of "a peculiar kind" ἰδιότροπος seem to me to refer much more to the general character of the books. The librarian of the king, Demetrius of Phaleron, says to the king that these books would be very difficult to translate, because, though they were like Syrian in script and sound, they were of a peculiar

kind. It is certain that the tone of these books and some of its words must have sounded very strange to the Greek mind; the translators must have been embarrassed at first by the names of God, for instance by the name Yahveh which, like the LXX, we translate by "the Lord." This is not a translation, it does not render the word itself: that is another word meaning "the Lord" and always spoken instead of Yahveh, which it was not allowable to pronounce. The word Yahveh is explained as meaning "I am" in Exodus iii. 14: "I am that I am." We have perhaps a trace of the true meaning in these words of Aristeas, quoted by Josephus: "We worship the God who has created everything, and we call Him properly *Ζῆν* (*to live*), deriving His name from the fact that He gives life to all things." To live and to be are ideas very near to one another.

In that case, the LXX solved the difficulty by following the synagogue, but they must have had many other difficulties.

It is hardly possible to give an historical value to the narrative of Josephus, who, copying Aristeas, tells us of the seventy-two old men, sent by Eleazar, who translated the books of the law in seventy-two days. But, if we put this narrative entirely aside and admit, with the latest editor of Josephus, M. Theodore Reinach, that the translation originated in the Jewish congregation of Alexandria, since we know that the Jews of Egypt wrote and spoke Aramaic, we cannot suppose that they changed their language, and it seems natural that they used Ezra's version of the laws.

That there has been an Aramaic Version, not only of the Law, but of other books of the Old Testament, seems proved by our Lord's history. He spoke Aramaic, and the multitudes whom He addressed must also have spoken

Aramaic. When, on the cross, our Lord quotes the twenty-second Psalm, the quotation is in Aramaic. Therefore there existed an Aramaic form of it.

Let us follow Jesus to the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 16). "And He entered, as His custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Isaiah, and He opened the book and found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor;
He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

And He closed the book and gave it back to the attendant."

Jesus opens, or rather unrolls, the book of Isaiah, and reads aloud the first verses of ch. lxi. If we compare the quotation with the Hebrew, or with the LXX, we find, that it does not agree completely with either. The Hebrew, in the third sentence of the quotation, reads thus: "He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim the liberty to the captives." The quotation omits the first part of the sentence, but it adds: "and recovering of sight to the blind," which is not in the Hebrew. The LXX have both additions, that of the Hebrew and that of the quotation. On the whole, the analogy with the LXX is greater than with the Hebrew. One can imagine, in a quotation, part of a sentence being omitted rather than another being inserted. Therefore it seems probable that our Lord read in a version of Isaiah similar to that from which the LXX had translated, one of those books that were in Egypt, sent by Eleazar if we believe the

narrative of Aristeas, or used in the synagogue of Alexandria, books which, as we have seen, were in Aramaic.

Jesus has the Aramaic alphabet before His eyes when He says: "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot (iota) or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished" (Matt. v. 18). Iota is certainly the smallest letter of the Aramaic alphabet, but it is not so in old Hebrew, The letter Z often joined to iota in the word ZI (who) may well be called a tittle in the Elephantiné papyri.

We saw above that when Ezra read the law to the assembly of the Jews, he and the Levites had to explain it. The Aramaic of the law differed in its dialect form from the Jewish spoken by the people; but since Ezra's time Aramaic had spread considerably in Palestine, the people no longer spoke Jewish, and when our Lord quotes a Psalm, He quotes it in Aramaic. This form of the Psalm naturally occurred to His mind, and was the most familiar to Him. I cannot help thinking that the roll of Isaiah, which our Lord opened and read, was written in Aramaic.

Later it is said that the apostle Paul, addressing the people at Jerusalem, spoke to them in the Hebrew language (Acts xxi. 40). The same word "Hebrew" is used of the inscription on the cross (John xix. 20), but we must not take this word Hebrew as referring to a distinct language known by its script and grammar; that is, not to what we now call Hebrew. We must remember that the ancients had not the nice linguistic classifications of the present day. Languages, for them, were not distinguished by their nature, they had the names of the nations who spoke them, whatever was their characteristic. "Hebrew," "Hebrew language," means here only the language spoken by the Hebrews, which was Aramaic. Paul calls himself a Hebrew of Hebrews (Phil. iii. 5), therefore for the ancients

his native language was Hebrew, though the linguists of our time would call it Aramaic. The proof that this name Hebrew is ethnic and has nothing to do with philology lies in the inscription on the cross where it is said that it was written in Hebrew, in Roman (*Ρωμαϊστί*) and in Greek. Roman, which we translate Latin, is no language at all, it was the idiom spoken by the Romans; it is the same with Hebrew. The special language of Judea, "the Jews' language," which in our Lord's time had been superseded by Aramaic, was called Jewish *Ἰουδαϊστί* (see p. 162) and not Hebrew.

The discovery of the papyri at Elephantiné has revealed to us a fact of great importance. The Jews in Egypt wrote and spoke Aramaic: there was a Jewish literature in Aramaic. When we try to realize what the writings of the Jews were, we must give to Aramaic a much greater place than before. Until the colonists of Elephantiné appeared, with their language, Aramaic was considered to be a strange tongue to the Jews: it was found in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, the men who had inhabited Mesopotamia. Nobody thought that Jews living in foreign countries, like Egypt, could have any other idiom than Hebrew. The Tel-el-Amarna tablets have taught us that cuneiform was the written language of Palestine shortly before Moses and afterwards. Elephantiné has shown us that Aramaic was the language of the Jews who took refuge in Egypt, and who certainly did not learn it there. They must have brought it from their native country.

The Prophets

Did the prophets write in Hebrew; are the writings of any of them in their original garb? This question naturally occurs after we have considered what Ezra's

work had been in reference to the law. Certainly Ezra was chiefly occupied with the law. He endeavoured to re-establish it amongst his people, but the prophets had not been forgotten. In his prayer Ezra confesses that the warnings of the prophets had not been heeded (Ezra ix. 10) : " And now, O our God, what shall we say after this ? for we have forsaken Thy commandments which Thou hast commanded by Thy servants the prophets, saying . . ." Also in the day of humiliation, described by Nehemiah, the Levites, after having read in the law blessed the Lord and after reviewing rapidly the history of the people of Israel, speak thus : " Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy law behind their back and slew Thy prophets which testified against them " (Neh. ix. 26). So that the prophets are considered here as being the successors of Moses, and they are witnesses against the people that they have broken the commandments.

The teaching of the prophets was chiefly by word, by speech ; they were the preachers who cried out the Lord's warnings, but they had also to write, and they often received the order to do so. In what language did they write ? What script did they use ? In trying to solve this important question we must put aside the view of language which still prevails largely in linguistic studies. Language has not always a script. Just as now we see a considerable number of idioms which have none, we can imagine legitimately and even say with certainty that this was the case with a considerable number of languages in antiquity, among people whose civilization was not very advanced. Judging from analogy with what we see at the present day, the various populations of Palestine belonging to the Semitic branch must have spoken somewhat similar dialects ; they could understand each

other, but these idioms were only spoken, they had no writing nor script. It seems natural to suppose that Hebrew was one of these dialects. Hebrew has too long been considered in a false light. To Hebrew, more even than to any other language, has been applied this erroneous and theoretical conception of language as a kind of moral entity, born nobody knows when and where, which has its laws to which men have to submit. Modern philology puts aside this abstract idea of the language and considers only the men who speak and write. This we must do in this case.

Abram was in Mesopotamia, in a land where there was a book language with a script the age and antiquity of which is not known, and which may have originated with another nation, the Babylonian cuneiform. If there was by the side of cuneiform another popular writing, it was Aramaic. As it is in every nation even in our time, the speech of the people was closely related to the written language, but yet was slightly different. Was this Mesopotamian dialect which the emigrants took to Palestine Hebrew? or was Hebrew another Semitic dialect, that of the inhabitants of Palestine, among whom the family of Abram settled? If it was the latter we must admit that Abram adopted it. This seems natural and in conformity with what takes place in our time. In every country where there are emigrants, the second generation born in the new country has sometimes quite forgotten the language of their fathers. From which of the above sources Hebrew came is not of much importance. Here I shall be allowed to repeat a quotation from Dr. Briggs[1]: "Whether Abraham adopted the language of the Canaanites or brought the Hebrew and Phoenician with him from the East, is unimportant, for

[1] See p. 14.

the ancient Assyrian and Babylonian are nearer to the Hebrew and Phoenician than they are to the other Shemitic families . . . in their earlier stages; in the time of Abraham their difference could scarcely have been more than dialectic." Dialectic —this seems to me to be the exact word to be applied to the differences between the speeches in Canaan and in Mesopotamia. But where I am obliged to disagree completely from Dr. Briggs is in this further sentence: "The Hebrew language as a dialect of the Canaanites had already a considerable literary development prior to the entrance of Abraham in the Holy Land." I cannot see where the learned Semitic scholar finds this literary development at that early epoch. On the contrary, Hebrew seems to me to have been a mere dialect, a spoken idiom without any literature, or script of its own. It is an inaccurate expression to speak of an old Hebrew script or of an old Hebrew alphabet; the proper name is Canaanite, for it is the same as Phoenician, and we have many more Phoenician inscriptions than Hebrew. That of Mesha the Moabite is, moreover, in that character. An alphabet is a way of expressing by writing that which is spoken, and the same alphabet can be used for very different languages; it is not the property of any one of them. In antiquity cuneiform has been used for Semitic and also for great numbers of non-Semitic languages. In our days Arabic letters are used for Arabic, Persian, Swahili and Turkish, while the tendency is for the Roman alphabet to supersede all others, including the German, and it is the only one now adopted for languages which had none. It was the same with Canaanite; on a smaller scale it was used in various dialects of Palestine, chiefly in trade and for the use of common life.

When the prophets had to write their solemn appeals,

their warnings to the people which are said to be the voice of the Lord and which often contained some terrific threats, would they choose the Canaanite alphabet? Several of them certainly knew of the Mosaic law written in cuneiform; prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah were not ignorant of it. A German scholar, Dr. Jeremias, on the strength of the passage in Isaiah viii. 1, which we have noted above, suggests that the prophets may have used cuneiform as a sacred script. In this respect a difference must be made between men like Isaiah, Jeremiah, men of high standing and advisers of the king, who might be called men of education, and a prophet like Amos who says: (vii. 14) "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdman, and a dresser of sycamore trees: and the Lord took me from following the flock and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto My people Israel." One may even ask in the case of Amos whether he wrote his book himself or whether it was written down for him by somebody else.

A passage which may throw some light on the question is found in Proverbs xxv. 1: "These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out." The English "copied out" does not seem to correspond exactly to the Hebrew. The LXX translate ἐξεγράψαντο, which at first sight seems also to mean "copied," but the Greek version adds two very important words: "These are the Proverbs of Solomon αἰνιγματικοί. In authors like Polybius this adjective means: the unintelligible ones. This cannot refer to the sense of the sentences—they are easy enough to understand—but to the alphabet. They were unintelligible to those who could not read cuneiform, as the law was to Hilkiah; and the men of Hezekiah did not only copy them, they wrote them in a script which could be understood. This would

correspond to the word of the Vulgate *transtulerunt*, and also to the Hebrew word which according to Koenig means "übertragen," a word, which, like the English "translate" has a figurative as well as a proper sense. This would represent very well the change of form produced by the passage from cuneiform to Aramaic.

According to this interpretation of the passage, Solomon wrote in cuneiform. In our first chapter we have advocated the idea that during his reign the Phoenician alphabet had been introduced into the kingdom by the people who worked upon the temple and who went to Lebanon. But Phoenician script could not be used for solemn words of the king which had the character of a moral law. For such impressive sentences, which people were to take at heart so as to rule their conduct according to the precepts, the language and the script of Moses would be used. The change from cuneiform is to Aramaic, so that this part of the book of Proverbs, the title of which seems to indicate a later addition, would already be in Aramaic before Ezra's time.

We are led again to the prophets, and we have to face the same question. Did the prophets write in Aramaic or in their own native language? Let us call this language by its proper name. It is not Hebrew, it is Jewish (Is. xxxvi 11, Neh. xiii. 24). In the two passages where it is mentioned it clearly means the common language used by "the people on the wall" and by the mass of inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, and this was different from the idioms spoken on the West or on the Philistine coast, in the East at Moab or at Ammon. Undoubtedly Isaiah used that language when he spoke to his countrymen at Jerusalem, and even when he spoke to the king. But was it a book language? When Isaiah took the "style of a man" and wrote, did he write Jewish? and

did he write it in the Canaanite script? This is a very grave question, which does not seem to have been as yet seriously raised and the answer to which seems to me logically derived from the facts newly discovered: the prophets in their writings used the literary language of their time, Aramaic, and when our Lord read Isaiah in the synagogue or when He quoted the twenty-second Psalm on the cross, these two texts which were in Aramaic were in the original form they had when first written down. It was not necessary for Ezra to transcribe them. If they had at the beginning been in Jewish, one does not understand the Aramaic stage which they went through. Besides this fact offers us a ready explanation of the present form of the documents of the Old Testament.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRESENT FORM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

IF the Old Testament books were written in Hebrew with the so-called old Hebrew alphabet why did not the rabbis preserve the books as they were? What were the reasons which induced them to change the script? And, when they changed it, why, instead of modifying the alphabet considered as their own, the old Hebrew, did they adopt a variant of the Aramaic alphabet? Half a century ago the eminent French scholar, the Marquis de Vogüé established the fact that square Hebrew was not derived from old Hebrew, or, as it is now called, Canaanite; but from Aramaic. The bearing of this discovery does not seem to have been realized to its full extent, especially as regards the fact that the inventors of the new script turned not to the Canaanite, but to the alphabet which is supposed to have originated in Mesopotamia, Aramaic.

We are not certain at present that Canaanite was ever the script of a book language; what has been preserved of it consists of inscriptions, ostracas, coins, but no book or fragment of book properly so-called; while documents like the papyri of Elephantiné can only be the products of a book language which had had a long existence. Bearing this in mind, and also the fact of the Aramaic derivation of square Hebrew, one is led to ask whether the idea that writings like the books of Kings, Isaiah or Job

were in the Hebrew language and in Canaanite character is not a mere literary hypothesis without any archaeological evidence in its favour. No doubt Hebrew goes back to a high antiquity as the dialect spoken by the Hebrews perhaps as early as Abraham. Such a dialect may last through centuries and deviate very little from its original form. We have proof of its existence in this passage: "When Laban and Jacob parted, and as a taken of their covenant made a heap of stones, Laban called it *Jegar-sahadutha*, but Jacob called it *Galeed* (Gen. xxxi. 47). The name given by Laban is clearly Aramaic, meaning the heap of witness; that given by Jacob is Hebrew and the lexicographers give it the same sense as the Aramaic on the strength of the translation of the LXX. But this word Galeed, the same as the geographical name of Gilead, though it is Hebrew, does not prove anything as to this idiom being a book language. The same is the case with the song of Deborah which, as we have seen, was not written down by the prophetess and may be compared to the often beautiful poetry found in some remote villages of the Abruzzi, and recited or sung in an Italian dialect very different from the literary and written Italian. In the same way I should call Hebrew the national dialect of the Hebrews, generally an unwritten idiom, having no script of its own, and, when it was necessary to write it for common use, employing the Canaanite alphabet.

We have seen already that when Hebrew is spoken of as a language it is called Jewish; both passages occur at a late date in the times of Hezekiah and Nehemiah. In both cases "Jewish" means the language of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. Especially when Nehemiah speaks of it, it is the language of the Jews of the remnant of the kingdom of Judah who had returned from Babylon

to rebuild the temple and reoccupy their native land. In connexion with this fact we have to notice these two others. Square Hebrew appears about the time of the Christian era, and this new Hebrew is a variant of Aramaic. These three facts seem to support each other and to countenance the following explanation.

The time of the Christian era was the epoch when the Roman empire extended over a great part of the East and West, when it brought under its yoke nations of very different type and origin. Though Roman policy left, as much as possible, to the subject nations their customs and their worship, nevertheless a certain amount of uniformity was necessarily introduced amongst them. They had the same masters and were governed according to the same principles. The Roman coinage was the outward sign of their subjection to a common ruler. Even the Jews were not absolutely hostile to their foreign governors, since some of them, like St. Paul, were Roman citizens and availed themselves proudly of their privileges.

Though they were a Roman province the Jews had retained a very strong national feeling ; they still remembered that they were the elect, God's people, they still repeated " we have Abraham to our father." But for them their national existence was intimately connected with their worship, with the strictest and the most formal observance of that law to which they had added many details. This worship distinguished them from the Gentiles for whom they felt an undisguised contempt and enmity. Their religion justified in their eyes their exclusiveness, it was the barrier which separated them from all the strange nations.

This religion, on which their life as a nation rested, was regulated by their sacred books, the law of Moses and the

prophets, and one may conceive how they would be attached to those books and the kind of worship which the rabbis more and more felt for its text. But the form of these writings in the last centuries before Christ had no distinctive character such as we might have expected from the particularism of the Jews. The writings were in Aramaic, the language of a considerable literature; they might be confused with other writings. I believe therefore that the rabbis found it necessary to give to their books a national character and appearance. They turned them into Hebrew, the idiom spoken by their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which was certainly their own language, that of Jerusalem. This they did not share with any other people. But this had no script and it was necessary to invent one. They would not take Canaanite; that was not their own; it had been used by the Phoenicians and other nations like Moab. They therefore invented a script, and for that they took the alphabet to which they were accustomed and which they used in their writings. They altered Aramaic sufficiently for their new script to be distinguished from it, so that it should stand by itself, and might be called their own. Since its adoption by the rabbis, Hebrew has thus become the distinctive language of the Israelites, and has given rise to a considerable literature.

The change of script, the adoption of square Hebrew at a late date, is not denied. It is a well established fact for all Hebrew scholars, who have generally interpreted it as a mere change of letters. Square Hebrew according to them simply took the place of the old Canaanite, the script of the Hebrew authors. This seems to me to be somewhat too subtle for these old scribes. The distinction between the letter and the word, between the characters and the idea which they express has been

established by modern philology and is one of its elementary principles. One can hardly imagine the rabbis changing merely the characters, transliterating a word from the Canaanite character letter for letter into the new script which they had adopted. It is quite different if they applied for the first time a new script to a language which had none before. They might have written it with the Aramaic alphabet which was familiar to them, but since they wished to have a distinct one, they merely modified that.

One thing is important to notice. When the rabbis turned the sacred books into the Jewish dialect, they did not translate the name of God. The name Jehovah, which is to be read Yahveh, is said (Ex. iii. 14) to mean "I am." The word "to be" is not here in its Hebrew form. It occurs in this form in two or three instances in which it is called, by lexicographers like Koenig, old and poetical. But it is the usual Aramaic for "to be" in the papyri of Elephantiné. From this word their name of God Yaho or Yahu is derived. It is an abbreviated form of Yahveh. Thus the origin of the name of God is not Jewish, it is Aramaic. Certainly it would be strange if the Hebrews had called their national God by a name coming from a foreign dialect.

The difference in the language itself is only dialectical, There is no wide breach between the Hebrew of the Bible and the Aramaic of the letter to Bagoas; we may even suppose that the scribes and the rabbis knew both the book language and the popular idiom just as a clergyman to-day in England or in a Swiss canton would understand equally well the text of the Bible and the popular speech of the peasants amongst whom he is living. This suggestion does not in the least impair the beauty of the Hebrew language nor of the works which it has produced. Be-

cause Deborah's hymn is in the popular idiom of her day, it is not less striking; the depth of her feelings, the triumphal emotion which pervades her heart does not come out less strongly because her song is not a written poem and was probably preserved in the memory of the people for a long time before it was put down in writing. Hebrew as a spoken dialect deserves our admiration just as much as if from the first it had been a literary language. Moreover it is interesting to think that the invention of the square Hebrew was not a mere literary fancy or a graphic simplification, but arose from a definite and decided intention to separate their sacred books from any other literature, and to set them apart as being the charter of the election of the Jews and the foundation of their national life.

CONCLUSIONS

THE reader who has followed me from the beginning will, I hope, have understood the principle on which are based the views here expounded as to how the oldest books of Scripture have been written. Some of these views, for instance those on the language of Genesis, had been already advocated by Assyriologists, chiefly by Professor Sayce; but I do not think that the general idea as to the way in which they reached their present form has been propounded before.

Since the year 1885 there have been two great discoveries, both made in the soil of Egypt, the Tel-el-Amarna tablets, and the papyri of Elephantiné. In my opinion these discoveries entirely change the traditional views concerning the language in which the books of the Bible have been written, and they sap the foundation of the critical system which rests necessarily upon the assumption that these books were original documents.

It is not the first time that excavations have produced such surprises, and have revolutionized not only literary theories, but even the great lines of history. Half a century ago whoever spoke of Homer, especially in German universities, paid homage to Wolff and bowed before his critical analysis of the poet's text. Since then Schliemann has appeared. His untiring zeal and passionate love for the Greek poet have revealed the remains of an unknown epoch at Troy and at Mycenae. Men of my age can remember the incredulity with which the discoveries in the capi-

tal of the Atrids were first received, and now the Mycenean civilization is a rich chapter in the history of Greek life and art. Older yet than Mycenae, Crete shows us a culture which nobody suspected before Sir Arthur Evans brought it to light ; and now the old idea that civilization was introduced by the Aryans, that this branch of humanity had a sort of monopoly of culture and progress, is fast being abandoned. There was, it is clear, a brilliant civilization before the Aryan invasions ; Africa, the dark continent which was looked at with a sort of contempt ; the Hamites, despised because of Noah's curse, are coming more and more to the front, and may have been after all among the oldest teachers of that part of mankind which lived on the shores of the Mediterranean. These stupendous discoveries, these entirely new fields, opened not long ago in a chapter of history which scholars thought they had correctly set forth from written documents and linguistic analysis, we owe not to books but to the work of the spade, to what has been found in the soil.

A discovery of a similar bearing has been made at Tel-el-Amarna, in the remains of the archives of an Egyptian king of the Eighteenth Dynasty. These tablets have shown that at that time, shortly before Moses, the written language of Palestine was Babylonian cuneiform in its local form with traces of a popular idiom appearing here and there. This fact has been confirmed by the excavations at Boghaz Keui where have been discovered documents of a later date. At the same time no trace of any kind of a literary Hebrew has been found belonging to such a remote epoch. Now, looking at the work of the critics in general, this fact, so important and so well ascertained, has evidently never been grasped in its fullness. In various ways they have tried to fit it into their system, but at present no critic has ever attempted to revise the system, to shape

it according to this fact, one of the best established in linguistic history. Leaving aside the philological analysis on which rests entirely the theory of the various documents of the Pentateuch, and taking merely the historical fact that the written language in Palestine, and not in that country only, but in the whole of Western Asia from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean, was Babylonian cuneiform, the conclusion which occurs naturally to our mind is that Moses wrote in Babylonian cuneiform. This was preeminently the language of laws, especially when they were supposed to have been dictated by God Himself. Moses, an Aramean, certainly had heard of Hammurabi the great Babylonian lawgiver ; he had been educated at the court of the king of Egypt where the correspondence not only with the governors of vassal cities but even with the sovereigns of Mesopotamia was in Babylonian cuneiform. He learnt that language and that script in the palace of Pharaoh. He may have spoken with his countrymen the dialect they had brought from Canaan, and which can be perceived in the letters of the governors, but this was certainly no written language, it was the popular and colloquial idiom, and not considered appropriate for laws and for God's words.

Critics will not deny this fact, but they will argue, as one of the most eminent of them wrote to me, that in the Pentateuch nothing comes directly from Moses, and that, at the utmost a few sentences may be older than the time of the Kings. That objection I have tried to answer by reviewing historically what is written about Egypt, about Joseph's life, about the Exodus and the Tabernacle. How could all these events be described as they are by two or more various authors living in different parts of Palestine and at different epochs ? How could, in particular, the history of Joseph have been written down except by a man

who was in Egypt at the time when the tradition was very vivid, when the Hebrews were still in Egypt and while they knew whose action had induced them to settle there?

The fact that all these narratives were written not as a running book, but on tablets, changes completely the character of the composition. It explains repetitions, which have been stumbling blocks to the critics, as the summaries of what has been said in previous tablets. Also we can distinguish those which were written separately and joined together afterwards in a book, like the beginning of Genesis, from those which were to form a series and are therefore more closely linked together. The style of the composition is no longer to be judged according to the rules set down for a book.

Deuteronomy, a copy of which I believe to have been put in the foundations of Solomon's temple, certainly bears the character of the last words of Moses, the character of a time when the people were in the sight of Canaan, when they could see better in what country they were going to settle and what were the inhabitants and their customs. Moses speaks there for the first time of a king because he foresaw that the Israelites would imitate the Amorites and the men of Bashan who were the subjects of Sihon and Og; this was the way in which all neighbouring nations were governed, but as to the worship he does not prophesy anything. He is certain there must be a place chosen among the tribes for the Lord's abode, but he does not know where. He is not allowed to enter the good land, therefore he cannot assume the glorious task of choosing that place; that choice will devolve upon his successors. The idea of a cedar temple to the Lord is quite strange to him; it does not even occur to his mind. If the Pentateuch is the work of Moses, as history and the contents of the book seem to prove, it cannot have been written in Hebrew which if it existed at

all at that time was only a spoken idiom and not a book language; it must have been written in Babylonian cuneiform.

The first transformation it went through was to be put into Aramaic, and this I attribute to Ezra. Such an enterprise seems to me to be in accordance with the character of Ezra as described in his book, and more especially in that of Nehemiah, and also with rabbinical tradition concerning him. Besides this it agrees also with the circumstances of his time. That was the epoch where cuneiform was more and more being abandoned for the popular language. Several centuries earlier the Mesopotamian kings had Aramaic scribes who explained to the people the contents of the cuneiform contracts, and who marked them with Aramaic dockets. Aramaic was the language in which Ezra conversed with the king, the king's letters and decrees were in Aramaic, as was also the law of the king which was to be obeyed like the law of God (Ezra vii. 26). Ezra, called by the king himself a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, did for the law of Moses what many scribes, his contemporaries did for other documents in Mesopotamia.

Although Ezra occupied himself pre-eminently with the books of Moses, it is quite possible that, as the tradition of the rabbis alleges, he also settled the canon of Scripture for the Old Testament; he perhaps collected and sifted the writings which were to form the sacred volume. As it came out of his hands the volume was entirely Aramaic.

The question as to the composition of the books of the prophets and of the didactic books is not so clear for a few of them. These writings, however, even if they were not originally composed in Aramaic as perhaps some of the Psalms, must have been put before the time of the LXX in Aramaic, and they were in Aramaic when our

Lord read Isaiah at Nazareth, and when he quoted the twenty second Psalm on the cross. This change of form and script, which I have attributed to Ezra, cannot be called a real translation; it was only a dialectal modification.

When I come to the present form of the Old Testament, the Hebrew of our Bibles, and have to explain its origin, I feel in a position similar to that of the critics, who after they had dissected the Pentateuch into small fragments had to create the seven authors to each of whom they attribute a different number of fragments. Having established an Aramaic form for the Old Testament it is necessary to explain the transition to the Hebrew language and to the Hebrew script. In my opinion these two changes were simultaneous. Hebrew, I have no doubt, was a spoken language, the dialect of Judea and of a great part of Palestine; the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna already show its existence, but it had no script of its own. What is called old Hebrew is Canaanite and is known much more by inscriptions of Phoenicia and Moab than by properly Jewish texts.

When the rabbis wished to give to their religion, to their laws, to their national life which rests entirely on their books, a thoroughly and exclusively Jewish character, they made a dialectal modification; they turned their books into the language spoken at Jerusalem; but since that had no script, they had to invent one and they adopted a modified form not of the Canaanite but of Aramaic, the one real book-language which they already knew. Between the new script and the old one there was no greater difference than between the two idioms.

With this summary of my conclusions I close this book, which, I have no doubt, most of my readers will find marked by a boldness verging on presumption. I hope, however, that they will recognize that in rejecting the philological

criticism I have endeavoured to the best of my ability not to deviate from historical facts. This method has led me to endorse completely the traditional view as to the books of Moses. I believe the books bearing the name of the great lawgiver are really his work, but that the form which they now have is not that of their original language. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ likewise are not known to us in the Aramaic in which they were uttered; they are known to us in Greek. But in the case of His words the translation is a complete one, while in the Old Testament it is merely a change of dialect.

INDEX

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